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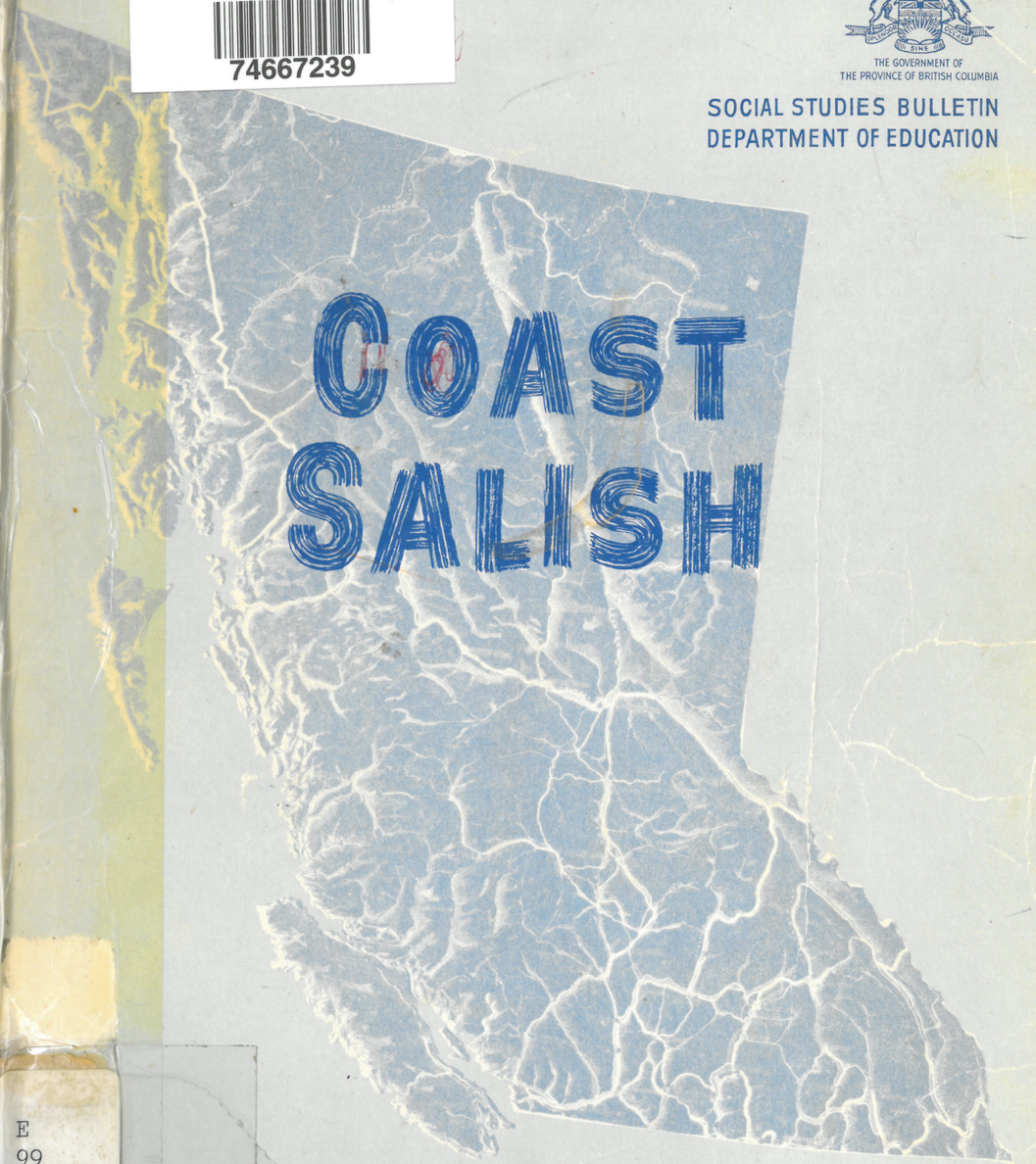

COAST SALISH

British Columbia Heritage Series
Our Native Peoples

1 VOLUME 2

PROVINCE OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
DIVISION OF CURRICULUM

British Columbia Heritage Series

Series I

OUR NATIVE PEOPLES

Volume 2

COAST SALISH

Prepared by

Provincial Archives
Provincial Museum

VICTORIA

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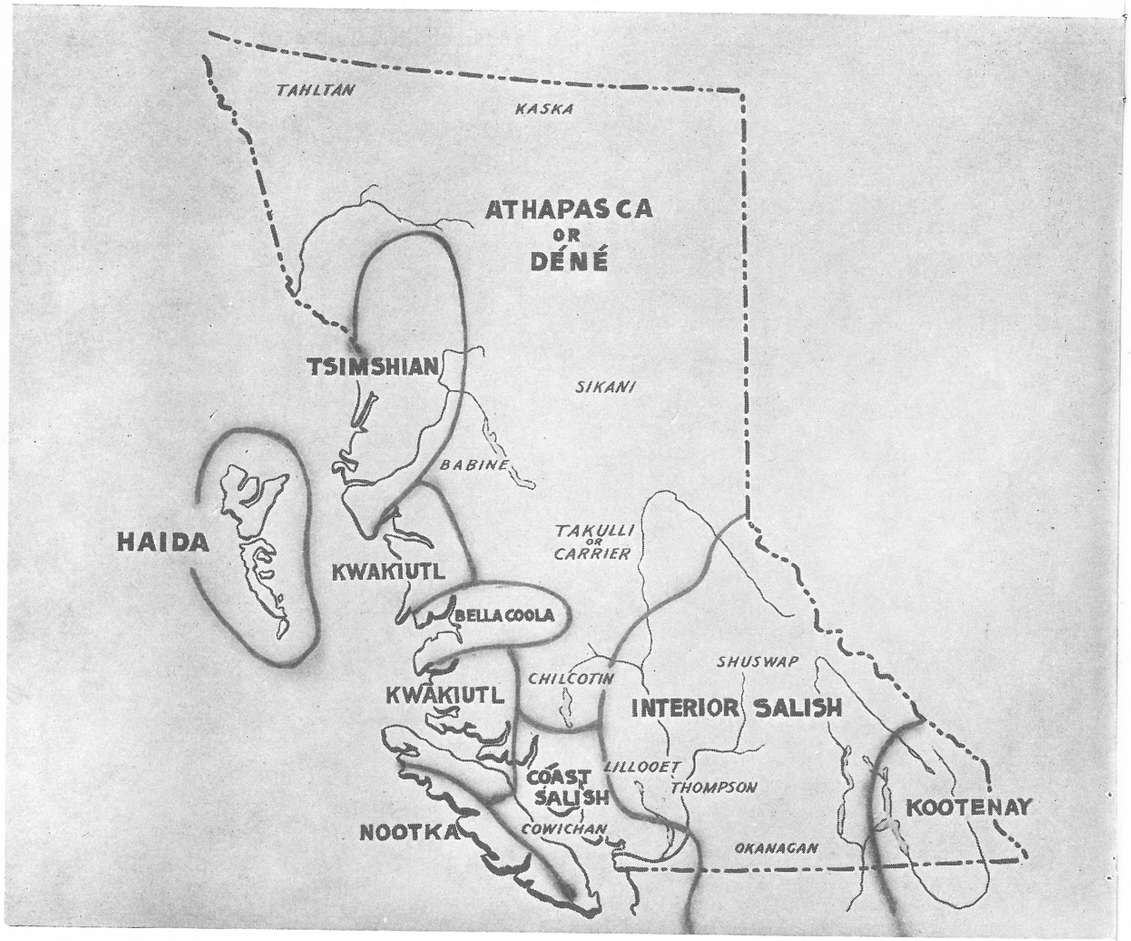
FOREWORD

It has long been recognized that an appreciation of the history and tradition of the local region wherein we live is basic to an understanding of national and even international concepts. Unfortunately, in the past, it has been relatively difficult for the teacher to obtain access to the material essential as background information.

It is anticipated that this series of publications, to be known as the British Columbia Heritage Series, will go a long way toward providing a remedy for this unfortunate situation. Because of the acute lack of information concerning the original inhabitants of our Province, this series has been designed to assist the teachers of British Columbia, and through them the pupils, in their appreciation of "Our Native Peoples."

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Appendices—



Culture-distribution map: Language boundaries of our native peoples.

Our Native Peoples: Coast Salish

INTRODUCTION

The Coast Salish Indians occupy an important position in the study of the native races of British Columbia. Despite the fact that they differ in many essentials from the groups of the north, in later times they have acquired so much of northern culture and are at the same time so closely connected with the Indians of the Interior that they are perhaps more typical of the native life of the Province than any other group. Not only did they occupy a large number of the islands of the Coast and thus have access to ideal fishing and hunting grounds, but they also had footholds far inland along the lower reaches of the Fraser River. Because of this wide dispersion throughout a diversified environment, they acquired a great variety of culture traits, and this characteristic has been further stimulated by contact with the northern peoples through the facilities of the maritime waterways.

The pictures of the Salish people drawn by the casual observer from random reading is apt to be made up of a confusion of facts in which it is difficult to discern any definite pattern of culture. For the purpose of this immediate presentation, questions relating to the possible multiplicity of groups migrating to the North-west Coast in the long-distant past cannot be discussed, but coming to more recent times we are able with more assurance to suggest that the Coast Salish came originally from the Interior plateau on the upper reaches of the Fraser and Thompson Rivers. Whatever type of people, if any, inhabited the coastal area prior to the arrival of the Salish it cannot concern us here, except perhaps to allow some idle conjectures as to their origin and possible effect on Salish culture. But it might be mentioned in passing that there are some indications that a pre-Salish population did exist, and, for a time at least, managed to maintain something of its own language and character in a few remote valley settlements.

Of the Salish groups, the one which seems to have left the most conspicuous mark is that referred to by Hill-Tout as the *Halkomelem,* which we know to-day by the name of *Cowichan.* Speaking the same language and evidently closely related to this group are the Stawlo of the Lower Fraser Valley.

In seeking evidence of culture diffusion, we find very little of importance coming from the south. In the north, however, at Salmon River on Vancouver Island and in the neighbourhood of Bute Inlet on

the Mainland, the Salish have acquired much of the more highly developed Kwakiutl culture. The gabled-roof house and an intensification of the wood-carving art are two of the most outstanding examples. These traits seem to have been of very recent acquisition and thus did not have time to become stabilized throughout the area before the arrival of the European undermined most of the aboriginal customs.

In the west, contact with the Nootka people was limited to canoe travel along the westerly coast of the Island and to an overland trail from Cowichan Lake to Alberni Canal. Nevertheless, some interchanges of culture took place. Inevitably, the most profound influence has been the European invasion, which in innumerable ways altered and destroyed the uniqueness of native life.

GEOGRAPHIC ENVIRONMENT

In general, due to the prevailing moist climate, heavy forest growth characterizes the entire coastal area. Dense forests of fir, spruce, hemlock, and cedar blanket the countryside, yet within the comparatively small section inhabited by the Coast Salish, considerable variation in topography occurs.

Home of the Coast Salish.

North, from Howe Sound to Bute Inlet, the most northerly extent of Coast Salish settlement, the heavily timbered, mountainous terrain of the Interior extends to the very edge of a deeply indented shore-line. In this area, in common with the rest of the Coast, the rainfall is heavy and the winters are characterized by much fog and many sunless days.

In the river valleys, particularly along the lower reaches of the Fraser, an easier topography prevails and one on which such trees as birch, alder, poplar, maple, and willow have usurped the dominant place of the giant evergreens. Here a somewhat sterner climate produces

heavy snow accumulation in the uplands, creating innumerable small streams which contribute to a large seasonal flow in the main rivers.

On the south-eastern littoral of Vancouver Island, a rocky, shallow soil prevails in which a type of scrub oak struggles for existence along with the juniper and some arbutus. In this section, and including the archipelago of islands stretching towards the Mainland, a slightly more moderate rainfall occurs. The surrounding waters, while relatively calm, are still dangerous because of the numerous hidden reefs, tide-rips, and treacherous currents.

The two dominant subsistence items of the Coast area as far as the natives were concerned were the salmon and the red cedar. Like the bison of the plains, these two gifts of nature provided the coastal groups not only with food, but also with shelter, clothing, and transportation, as well as with weapons and implements of many kinds.

ETHNIC ORIGINS: PHYSICAL TYPES AND SUBDIVISION OF GROUPS

There is much supposition involved in establishing the original home territory of the people we now term Coast Salish Indians. Prehistoric evidence, in the form of materials obtained from the many shell-mounds found throughout the coastal area, indicates that several obvious differences existed between the cultures of the northern tribes and those of the Salish groups. These differences, particularly in the case of essential tools such as axes and hammers, lead us to suppose that the people of the north and those of the area adjacent to the Fraser River delta, originated from two separate stocks.

The question remains: Where was the former habitat of the Coast Salish? Besides the evidence of language characteristics, striking similarities between the artifacts found in the coast shell-mounds and those found in some of the ancient burial-grounds of the more easterly Interior groups indicate a close cultural relationship and suggest that at some pre-European period the ancestors of the present Coast Salish migrated from the inland areas.

Many factors may have entered into the gradual movement of Salish people to the Coast area: Pressure of migrations from the eastern plains; a sudden scarcity of game; or perhaps simply the haphazard wanderings of some of the more intrepid hunting groups. In any event, it was probably such groups which first by-passed the unnavigable waters of the Fraser Canyon in the vicinity of Lytton and Hope by crossing the rugged Coast Range Mountains and discovered the teeming food resources of the Fraser River delta and coastal waterways.

Approaching this subject historically and linguistically, taking most of our authority from the early work of Hill-Tout, who was in close contact with the Salish people of his time, it is evident that the Salish migration to the Coast area was of comparatively recent date, and that it took place not as a conquering nation but rather in a series of nomadic groups. Once the more daring had made their way into the coastal area and news of their discoveries had filtered back to relatives on the plateau, more and more families attempted and achieved the difficult trip and took over the Coast region as their homeland.

It has been suggested that some of the physical and cultural variations found within the Coast Salish stock may be the result of the absorption of pre-Salish coastal types, but since we have no definite proof concerning even the existence of such people, this must necessarily remain mere speculation. However, there were very noticeable differences as well as similarities between the cultures of the Interior Salish and those of the Coast Salish. In both house sites and construction, in physical appearance, as well as in details of burial practices and other

social customs, the coastal people showed variations which might, or might not, be due solely to differences in environmental conditions during a few centuries of separation from the parent stock.

Once the waters of the Lower Fraser River had been reached, the Salish spread out fanwise to embrace a considerable area of what is now the State of Washington, but confining our remarks to the people of this Province, it may be said that from Spuzzum, on the Lower Fraser, the Salish spread out via navigable waters into the Mainland territory surrounding the mouth of the river and from here, following the natural sea lanes northward, they reached as far as Bute Inlet. About the same time the Gulf Islands and Vancouver Island were occupied, with a northward penetration as far as Salmon River. Westward penetration on Vancouver Island was limited largely by the central mountain range and the powerful Nootka villages, with outposts on the Alberni Canal.

Compared physically to the more commonly known "Red Men of the Plains," or even to his brother Salish of the Interior plateaux, the typical Coast Salish Indian had neither the height nor the slender lithe-ness of the former. In general, the features of these coastal people are somewhat coarse and heavy, but not so much so as those of the people to the north. The hair is coarse and straight, but it is often of a very dark reddish-brown rather than universally black. The hair of the head is sometimes supplemented by a coarse beard, and their eyes, although dark and smallish, carry little, if any, of the Mongoloid slant. However, physical structure is by no means uniform within this group, and average variations in stature from 158 to 164 centimetres for men and from 150 to 154 centimetres for women have been noted.

There was no central leadership or sense of political unity between the various village groups of the Coast Salish. There was a certain pride of ancestry which provided a loose bond between related families of different villages, but such a feeling was too narrow and restricted to have given rise to any form of national life. It is important to emphasize the difference between the feeling of mutual dependency which existed among many related groups of the eastern peoples, and the loose, rather haphazardly accepted kinship relations of the Pacific Coast villages, of which the Salish were the most loosely knit.

As to their subdivision, the Salish people of the Coast were assembled in groups of villages located with broken continuity according to the topography and food resources of each local area. These village groups have been subdivided by some authorities into four general groupings on a linguistic basis:—

Comox.—Occupying the midsection of the east coast of Vancouver Island and the adjacent Mainland littoral. These people are the most northerly situated of the Salish and in consequence show more evidence of contact with the Kwakiutl culture.

Cowichan.—Occupying territory immediately south of Comox on Vancouver Island together with some of the adjacent islands and certain sections of the Fraser River delta area.

Sanetch.—Occupying the southern tip of Vancouver Island and some areas on the Mainland in the vicinity of what is now the City of Vancouver.

Squamish.—Occupying certain sections of the lower reaches and delta of the Fraser River.

It must be remembered that intermarriage and the periodic movement of whole villages—occurrences which were not infrequent even up to quite recent times—make it impossible to draw rigid linguistic boundaries.

There are several different dialects among the Coast Salish, many of which are not mutually understood. At least six of these are found in British Columbia, where a wide gulf occurs between the Salish dialects of Vancouver Island and adjacent Mainland on the one hand, and those of the Fraser River delta on the other. The dialects of the latter area are more closely related to those of other Salish groups on the United States side of the border.

One interesting difference between the Salish groups and those of Northern British Columbia, which is noticeable in the naming of villages, is that the ancestors of the former named their villages and communal groups after the topographical features of the districts in which they were found, whereas the latter were accustomed to name theirs according to the social gatherings peculiar to each.

SUBSISTENCE

I. Food

The river conditions typified by the Fraser River caused a specialization in the salmon industry. These fish were harvested in such numbers that, broadly speaking, it may be said that the whole food economy of the people centred around this one activity. This, of course, does not apply quite so consistently to the island peoples, whose diet was supplemented to a greater extent by other sea foods. Yet it may be said that on the west coast of our Province the salmon and other sea harvests dominated the thoughts and lives of men, leaving them neither time nor actual necessity for tilling the land. However, a near approach to agriculture is found in the activities of the women, who, in gathering wild roots and berries, exercised a rough weed-control over their plots by periodic burnings and by pulling out shrubs and coarse herbage found in the camass fields.

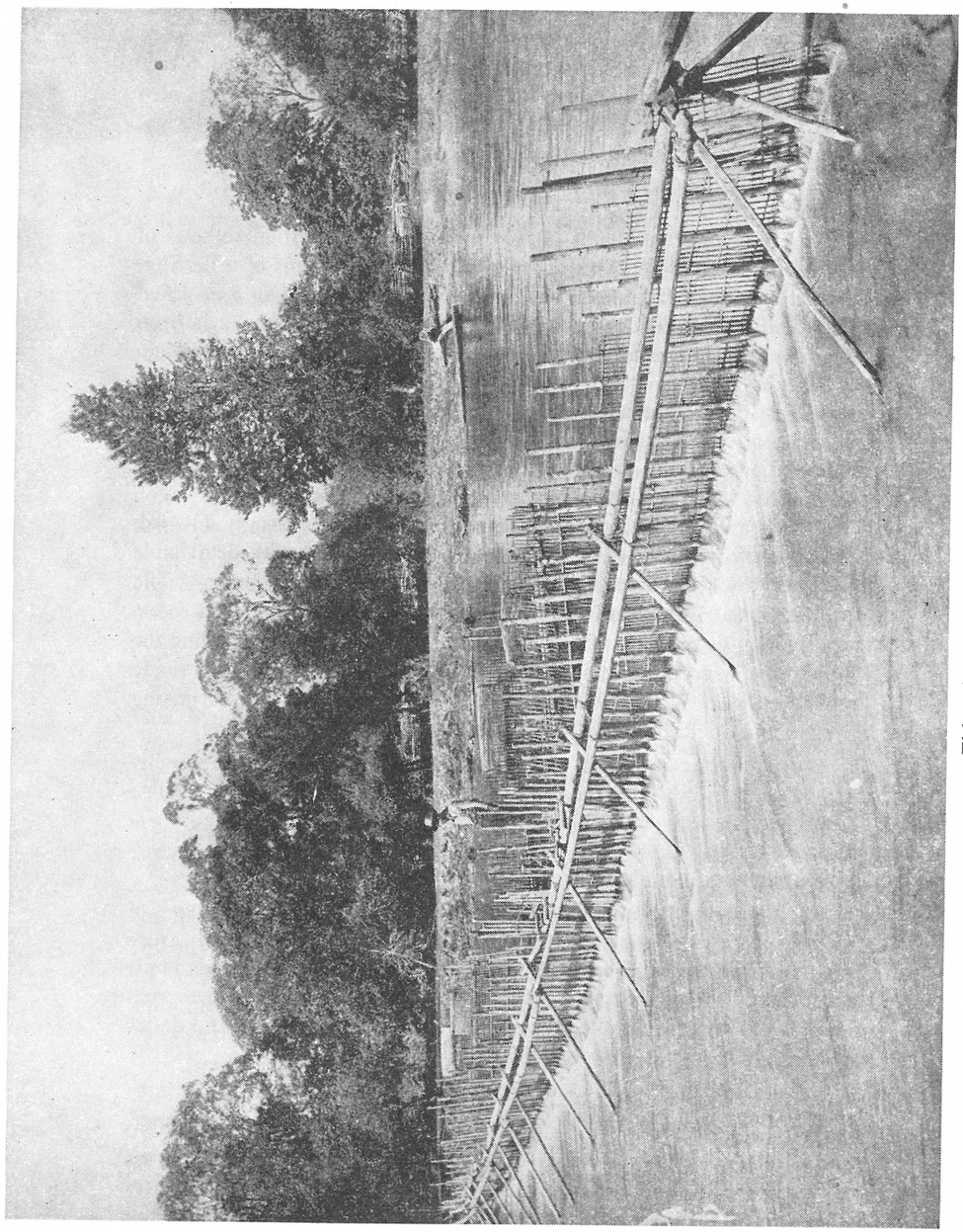
(*a*) Types of Food

Salmon

The salmon then was the one predominant item in the food economy of the Coast Salish, whether they were river people or sea-shore dwellers. There are five species of salmon common to the North-west Pacific area and each of these species spawned at slightly different seasons, seeking more or less remote fresh-water streams for that purpose. Economy demanded that full advantage be taken of the limited harvest season, hence methods were devised for taking the fish from the first moment they appeared in groups or shoals until the spawning commenced.

For this purpose, reef, or gill, nets made of nettle fibre were used in the open waters of the southern part of Vancouver Island. These were operated between two canoes, wherever the fish were found in any numbers—usually near the mouths of the larger streams. Later, when the fish had actually entered the river, dip-nets and harpoons were used, the rivers affording many suitable spots where rocky ledges overhung deep pools in which the fish rested on their way up the stream. The Indians often supplemented these natural platforms with light staging, from which they could work more easily.

On the smaller streams of the coastal area, various types of dams and enclosures were used to stop the fish in their up-stream journey. Operating either from the weir itself or from canoes, the fish were landed by dip-nets, harpoons, or gaffs. As soon as the fish were taken they were thrown to the women, who split them open, spread them with pointed sticks, and hung them in the sun to dry. Later they were stored in special elevated caches.



Fish-weir at Cowichan River.

Other Fish

Both *halibut* and *cod* were taken off shallow banks by means of U- or V-shaped hooks of bent hemlock-root or yew-wood. These were usually attached in pairs, one to each end of a slender rod, 4 or 5 feet long, with the main fishing-line attached to its centre. Cod were also speared after being lured within reach by means of a shuttlecock device, which, after being lowered to the bottom on weights, was freed by means of a trip and came whirling to the surface followed by the inquisitive fish.

Closely compacted shoals of *herring* appeared at certain seasons of the year and these were taken in great quantities by means of a herring-rake—a long lath-like stick set with narrow bone teeth along 3 or 4 feet of one end. Operated by hand from a canoe and swept upwards from under the shoal of fish, this implement achieved maximum results in a minimum of time.

In passing, it is interesting to note that this rake appears to be of very ancient origin, with the suggestion that its use on the Coast area may have preceded the arrival of the Salish.

Sturgeon, some giants weighing as high as 600 pounds, were taken from the Fraser and Squamish Rivers during spawning season. The fish were located by means of long-handled harpoons fitted with detachable heads to which were attached independent lanyards and floats. The position of the fish being once marked, further strikes could be made until the number of lines was sufficient to stand the strain of hauling the catch to the surface. The lines used for this purpose were usually made from dried kelp, which, when stretched and treated, were of surprising strength and could be found in single strands up to 150 feet long.

Eulachon, or candle-fish, a relation of the salmon family, were highly prized for their oil, which was extracted from them for use as a relish in conjunction with other foods. These fish ran in such great numbers that they literally choked the waters and could be scooped up in loosely woven baskets quite easily.

Each group of Indians were specialists in the particular type of fishing most profitable in their locality. This specialization arose naturally from the local environment and the habits of the various kinds of fish found there. Among the Indians themselves, a line of demarcation was drawn between those people who fished in the rivers and deltas and those who were " salt-water people."

Lesser Sea Foods

Herring-spawn was considered a delicacy among the Salish. To secure this, fresh fir branches were submerged among the sea-grass growing close to the shore in favoured spawning places. When masses of spawn had become entangled in the fir branches, they were lifted out

and brought ashore. Although relished as a fresh food, large surpluses were dried in the sun and stored for winter use.

Sea-urchins, or " sea-eggs," eaten raw while quite fresh, were also a favourite delicacy, being said to have a flavour equal to the best oysters.

Devil-fish was another form of sea life considered a succulent morsel by the Salish. The tentacles of these were chopped into lengths and boiled in salt water till they became red. The skin was then stripped off and discarded and the mass reboiled in fresh water and eaten immediately, the taste being similar to that of crab-meat.

Clams

From very ancient times clams have been an important food to the natives of the North-west Coast of America as well as in other parts of the world. Immense banks, composed entirely of clam-shells, are seen in various parts of the district occupied by the Coast Salish. At Kuper Island, for instance, there were banks from 12 to 15 feet in thickness, composed entirely of stratum after stratum of clam-shells and indicating centuries of accumulation. It is evident from this that clam-digging areas represented highly desirable settlement sites, villages being built as close to them as the requirements of shelter and fresh water would allow.

To prepare the clams, they were first steamed in a subterranean pit before being removed from their shells. They were then impaled on skewers and hung in the sun to dry before being stored for winter use.

Sea-mammals

Hunting the lesser sea-mammals appears to have been a privilege of the higher ranks of Salish society. Whales, apparently, were rarely found in the straits and never hunted systematically, but seals and porpoises were abundant. Hunting these in the water required superior nerve, skill, and equipment, and the task was regarded as involving much honour. Religious preliminaries were engaged in by the hunters in which sanction to their proposed undertaking was supposedly granted in a dream. In such places where the seal-herds came ashore, the usual method of taking them was by clubbing, after delaying their escape by means of large sinew nets stretched between rocks at points where they were in the habit of taking to the water. This method of hunting, naturally, involved less risk and consequently there was less dignity attached.

The flesh of both the seal and the porpoise was greatly prized. The fat was rendered down in wooden vessels by means of hot-stone heating and was either stored in the bladder of the animal from which it was taken or in the distended, bulbous ends of the sea kelp.

Sea-lions offered a major display of hunting prowess, but since the value of the animal was not in proportion to the risks involved in

capturing it only the most intrepid hunters would attempt this work for the sake of its valuable gut.

Water-fowl

In the days prior to the arrival of the white man, enormous flocks of water-fowl inhabited the Coast area. Although some geese and swans were taken, ducks provided the Indians with the most abundant catch. The principal method of duck hunting involved the use of a net strung on high poles and set up in narrow defiles or spots between trees where ducks were likely to pass. These nets were set on carefully weighted frames which collapsed on the birds as soon as they came in contact with them. The habits of the ducks were closely studied so the hunters would know exactly in which direction they would rise when driven from the water or in which direction they habitually approached their nightly resting-place.

A second method of hunting water-fowl was to lure them, by means of torches and flares, into blinds built of brushwood. Small canoes, manned by two men, followed the birds into the blinds and secured them quietly by means of a multiple-pronged spear.

Deer and Large Game

The hunting of deer usually involved the efforts of an entire community, in which many men and dogs took part. Traps made of sinew net, similar to those used in the taking of sea-mammals, were set across narrow passes toward which the deer were driven where they could be more easily slaughtered by bow and arrow and spear. Slip-loop snares attached to the tops of bent saplings, which were triggered in position, was another method used in capturing elk. Both deer and elk were sufficiently abundant in the parkland areas to make it unnecessary for the natives to make expeditions into the hills. The one animal for which such a journey was undertaken was the mountain-goat, the wool of which was greatly valued for weaving blankets, but the habitat of this animal was usually the preserve of the privileged upper classes.

Methods of hunting game would not be complete without mention of the highly trained dogs which the Salish used. For a dog to be brought to the peak of hunting perfection, some magic and a great deal of personal care were required. The intelligent animals thus developed were respected members of the community. They were used particularly for driving mountain-goats into ambush and for herding deer and elk into rivers and lakes where they could be easily overtaken and slain by men in canoes.

Vegetables

The vegetable foods of the Coast Salish included a long list of edible roots, berries, fruits, green leaves and seaweed. One of the most

favoured was the root of the camass—a lily variety which grew prolifically in certain grassy areas. The roots of the bracken fern, white clover, and several other kinds of lilies were also sources of food. The principal method of cooking these roots and bulbs was by baking or steaming them in an underground oven.

Two types of bread were made in this area, one from acorns and one called sap-bread, made from the inner bark of certain trees such as the maple and alder. The making of acorn bread was a trait which had spread up from the inland areas of California, Oregon, and Washington, the natives there having discovered a method whereby the tannin could be removed by pounding the nuts into a paste and leaching it in water until edible. The sap-bread was made by a process of scraping out the inner bark and laying it in criss-cross fashion until a thick cake was formed. This cake was dried in the sun or over a fire and laid aside for winter use.

Salmonberry-shoots were another favourite dish of the Coast Indians. Coming after a long winter of fish and grease diet, all this fresh vegetation was highly relished and was made the subject of special religious ceremonies in which thanks were given before any of the food was eaten. It was believed that violation of this rule would bring ill luck on future food-supplies.

(*b*) Meals and Cooking

In the Indian life of the Pacific Coast, there were but two regular meals. Food was prepared and served before the men set out on the duties of the day and again in the evening when they returned.

Although the Indians were not averse to eating raw or dried foods on hunting expeditions, cooking was preferred and warm meals were served in the community houses. Flavour was appreciated and the cooking was done with an eye to taste as well as to nutriment, although, from the European's point of view, oil and grease were used in their raw state much too abundantly.

There were three principal methods of cooking: (*a*) Steaming in an earthen pit; (*b*) roasting before an open fire; and (*c*) boiling by means of hot stones placed in a wooden box or basket containing water.

Steaming in a pit was a very ancient method, which has wide distribution. A fire was lighted in a pit about 3 feet deep and rocks piled on top of the fuel. When the pit and stones were thoroughly heated, the remnants of the fuel were removed and a specially chosen green herbage placed on the hot stones. On top of this the food was carefully placed and covered with more green herbage. Over this, earth was thrown and a hole punched in the top through which water was poured. The hole was then closed to prevent the escape of the steam and the food left to cook. The length of time allowed depended upon

the type of food. Bear-meat might require only a few hours, whereas some of the less tender roots were given as much as thirty-six hours before being considered fit for eating.

The roasting method was used particularly for salmon. The fish was split on the ventral side and spread on a split stick. The lower ends of the sticks were stuck in the ground at an angle which inclined the fish over the fire.

Boiling was accomplished by hot stones being dropped into a box or basket of water until the water boiled. Some of these stones were then removed to make room for the food and the water temperature maintained by adding hot stones and removing the cooled ones. Few stones were required to bring a moderate quantity of water to a boil since very little heat was lost by radiation from either the wooden box or basket.

II. Clothing

In their daily vocations, the Coast Salish avoided clothes wherever possible, only covering their bodies when bad weather prevailed. Early pictures of these people show the men either entirely naked or in ragged fringe-like breech-clouts, and the women in short, knee-length aprons of twisted cedar-bark shreds fastened at the waist. However, in the heat of summer, and particularly in the case of the slave class, clothing was often dispensed with altogether.

In general, the common people made extensive use of deer-skins and woven cedar-bark trimmed with fur. The upper classes were dressed in more carefully fashioned clothes in which coloured wool blankets were a prominent feature. Women's skirts or aprons were made of shredded cedar-bark or of rushes and were usually woven in one piece. The preparation of this material involved a special technique in which seasonal gathering, shredding, beating, and hand-working all played a part.

In rainy weather both sexes wore a long robe fastened over the left shoulder and leaving only the right arm free. These garments were usually made of fur-bearing skins, although tanned deer-hides and even the skins of birds were frequently used.

Broad-brimmed hats of cedar-root were also worn in inclement weather, especially for canoe travel, and to this dress was often added a cedar-bark raincape.

No trousers were worn by the men, except toward the eastern margin of the Coast area where contacts with the plateau people were maintained. The same condition prevailed regarding moccasins. The Coast Salish are generally spoken of as going without footwear, but apparently hunters occasionally made use of foot and leg protection in the colder areas.

The prevalence of flies on this Coast caused men to cover their bodies in self-protection. This they did with grease, which, while in no sense a garment, was nevertheless a favourite body covering among the people in their aboriginal state.

III. Housing

The houses of the Coast Salish differed considerably from any other form used by the aborigines of North America. The chief characteristics of these houses were fivefold:—

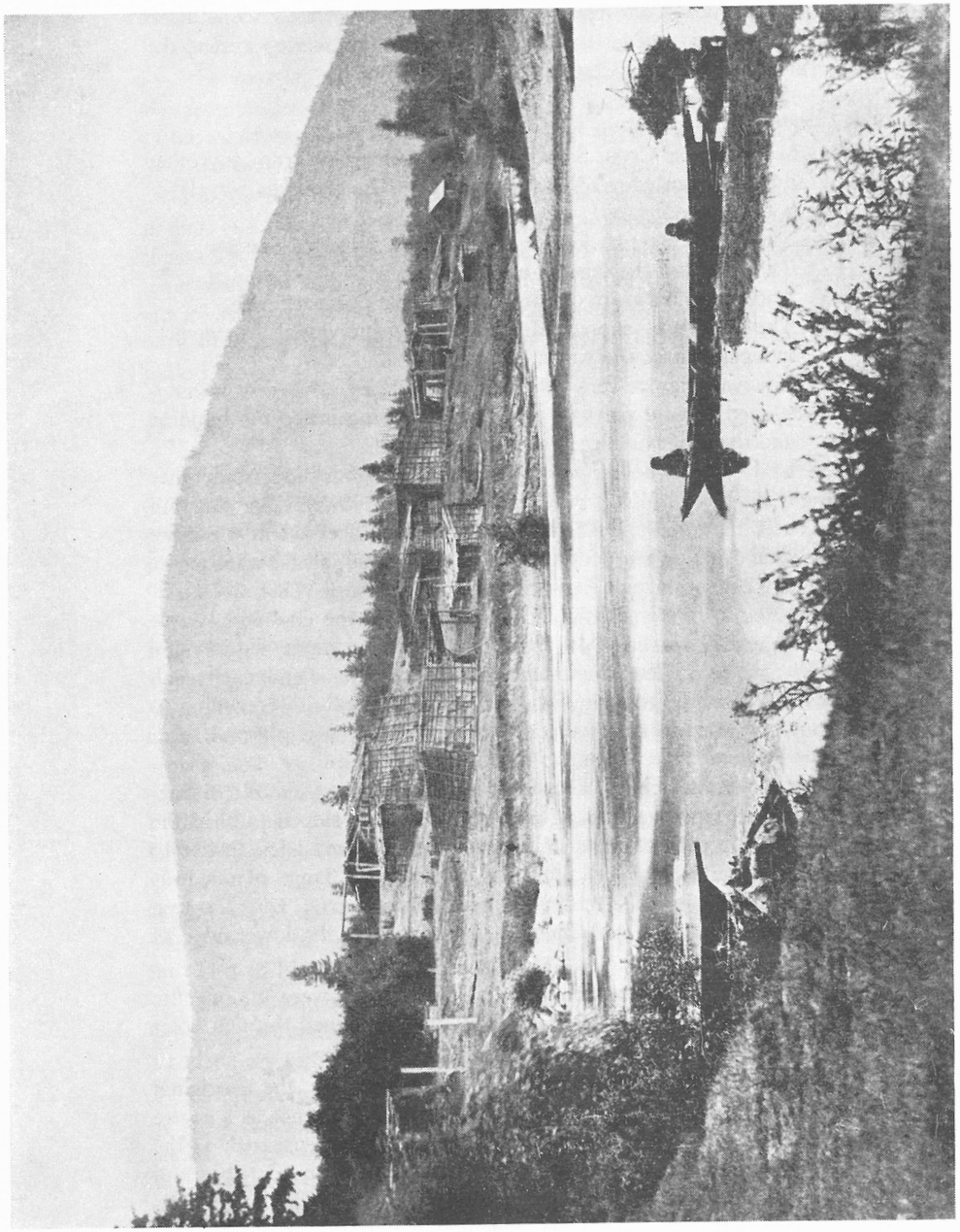
(1) They were of great length, often several hundred feet long.
(2) They were of the lean-to or " shed " type.
(3) Their interiors were divided into definite compartments.
(4) The roof was supported on a heavy individual framework, independent of the walls.
(5) The wall planks were held longitudinally by sewing, or lashings carried around pairs of uprights, one being inside the building and the other outside.

The front of the house was generally the higher side, sometimes reaching a height of 30 feet, but often being much lower. We can gain some idea of the larger type from Simon Fraser's account in which he describes one as being 640 feet long by 60 feet broad, all the apartments being square except the chief's, which was 90 feet long. This, of course, was something of a royal palace. The houses of the common people were considerably smaller. In these, each stall or room was divided from the next by a few planks hung with rush mats and each such compartment was the living-quarters of a single family. According to Hill-Tout, the average space allotted to each family was about 40 feet square.

The roofs of all such houses were flat enough to be used as a sitting-out place for the people, but, of course, sufficiently sloped to shed the rain. The wide cedar boards of the roof were grooved lengthwise to a flat U-shape and arranged alternately so that the flange of one was turned down to fit into the upturned flange of the next. Thus the rain was diverted into a series of channels and carried to the lower edge of the roof.

Each house had an earthen floor on which fires were lit, one fire usually serving at least two families. The smoke escaped through holes left in the roof for that purpose.

In addition to its primary use as a place of dwelling, the aboriginal house on the North-west Coast was also of major importance as a centre of defence against raids. The better food-producing areas, such as the Fraser River delta, were envied by less fortunately situated tribes and the surrounding waters became the subject of many fishing agreements in which the controlling villagers benefited materially. Controversies



Quamichan Village.

over tribute often subjected these localities to raids by invading forces, and hence measures for defence had to be devised. The design of the long house was found to be quite effective as a fortification. The stout cedar planks provided protection while through the crevices arrows could be directed against the enemy.

In these houses there were only two doorways, both of which were barricaded during attacks. Since stockades were used in warfare throughout the district, it is possible that the lean-to type of house may have evolved from shelters built in the lee of stockades originally erected solely for the purpose of defence.

The form of house just described is generally regarded as the Salish type, but there were others. The *kekuli* or semi-subterranean house, common to the Interior Salish, was not unknown on the Coast. Examples of this type are recorded at Point Grey, Howe Sound, and Bute Inlet and in some instances are referred to as retreats in time of war.

Less typical of Salish culture is the gabled-roof house of plank construction as built by the Sechelt. Here we have a transfer from the Kwakiutl culture of the north and one that has been further extended among the Salish during the last eight or nine decades.

Last and least important of all is the summer shelter of the lean-to type built of brush and odd planks in a very rough manner. Rush mats, brought from the permanent villages, are typical of these dwellings, which were erected as temporary shelters on distant food-gathering grounds.

The rush mat referred to may be considered as an emblem of domestic comfort among the Salish. It was a part of every domestic scene, being used not only in place of our mattresses and cushions but also as screens for privacy, or fastened to the plank walls as decoration.

IMPLEMENTS, TECHNIQUES, AND INDUSTRY

I. Tools and Weapons

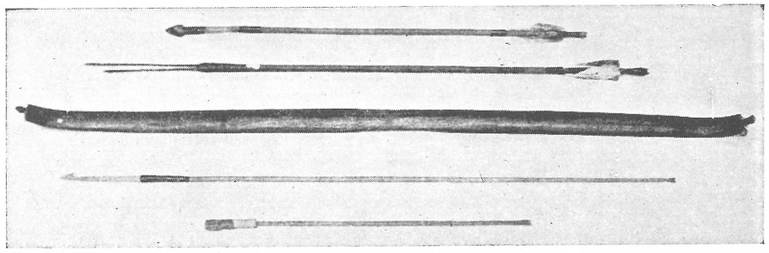
The variety of techniques and implements developed or acquired by the Coast Salish is comparable to that of any other tribe in Canada. When one considers the many uses made of local materials and the many advantages taken of local conditions, it is realized that a high degree of native ingenuity was required. Although the relative ease of subsistence, as compared with other less fortunate peoples, did not tend to provoke great inventive achievements, yet the number of techniques and implements employed by the Salish indicate that they responded actively and imaginatively to the challenges of their environment.

Vegetable fibres, seaweed, the hides and sinews of animals, local stone, sea-shells, and the horns and teeth of land and sea animals were all employed in a variety of clever uses.

The *harpoon* with the detachable head is only one instance of this. With a blade of mussel-shell set in between two barbs of bone or horn and attached to a strong line of braided sinew or kelp, these implements pierced and secured themselves sufficiently to allow even the heavier sea-mammals to be hauled ashore. The haft, which fitted into a loose socket between the two barbs, was held temporarily in place by winding a few turns of the attached line around its shaft. The struggles of the wounded animal were usually sufficient to loosen the windings and allow the haft to fall free. It could then be retrieved and fitted to another head, ready for a second strike.

The *dip-net,* used to take fish from the pools or weir-traps, was usually quite large, the hoop being often 3 or 4 feet across. The net, made from nettle fibres or Indian hemp, was suspended from the hoop by slack rings. A cord was attached at one point to enable the fisher to close the top of the net immediately the fish was taken.

Also devised were ingenious types of multiple-pronged *fishing-spears.* One type had a centre prong which pierced the fish while the outside prongs, fitted on the inner side with strong barbs, were forced open by the thrust and closed over the body of the catch.



Salish bow and arrows.

For the chase, the most universal weapons of the district were the *bow and arrow,* the latter being usually tipped with a hard slate point. Long, thin bone points were also used for hunting ducks and these frequently had multiple barbs. Roughly chipped stone points were used on the Southern Mainland and some few specimens have been found on the southern end of Vancouver Island. The bird-arrow with a wooden-knob tip was in general use as was the double-pointed arrow for small game. The bows used by the Coast people were short, rarely exceeding 3 feet in length. Yew was considered the best wood for these, but where that was not available, dogwood, willow, or even cedar was used. For greater elasticity, the haft of the bow was backed with sinew, cherry-bark, or snake-skin. Target practice with both bow and arrow and sling was encouraged among the boys of the villages, and prowess gained with this latter weapon led to its occasional use for hunting birds.

Ambush and hand-to-hand fighting at night were the characteristics of coastal warfare. Thus the major weapons used were *clubs, spears,* and *daggers.* Bone blades were common for these spears, but blades of hard woods, such as yew or hardhack, were also used. The clubs were usually made of wood and about 30 inches long. Paddle-shaped clubs of slate or other stone are sometimes found, but these appear to be of more ancient origin than the present population.

Among the common implements used for more peaceful purposes we find the *stone hammer, chisel,* and *adze.* The stone hammer used by the Coast Salish, unlike those of the northern Indians, was not fitted with any sort of handle. The stone was shaped like an ordinary pestle —an implement commonly used among primitive agriculturists for pulverizing grain. The Salish people never used it for that purpose however, no grain of any kind being grown or gathered by the Indians of the North-west Coast.

With this pestle-hammer and a wedge-like chisel made from basalt or nephrite, trees were felled, canoes were hollowed from solid tree boles to a line of symmetry and perfect balance, and house timbers were cut and shaped to various dimensions. The D-adze, which in the early days was a stone blade bound to a D-shaped handle, aided materially in every type of woodwork. Hardwood or horn wedges were also used to split the cedar-trees into planks of proper thickness. To prevent splitting the butt ends of their chisels, the natives would often encase them in a bone socket or bind them in a hide covering, which tended to cushion the blow of the hammer.

Numerous other kinds of domestic tools were used by the women. Many types of *knives* were needed to split the fish and to cut and split the roots, grasses, and fibres for basketwork. Still other implements were the wooden digging sticks of various types for digging clams and

edible roots, and the wooden bark-scrapers and beaters for gathering and preparing the cedar-bark for weaving.

II. Canoes and Woodworking

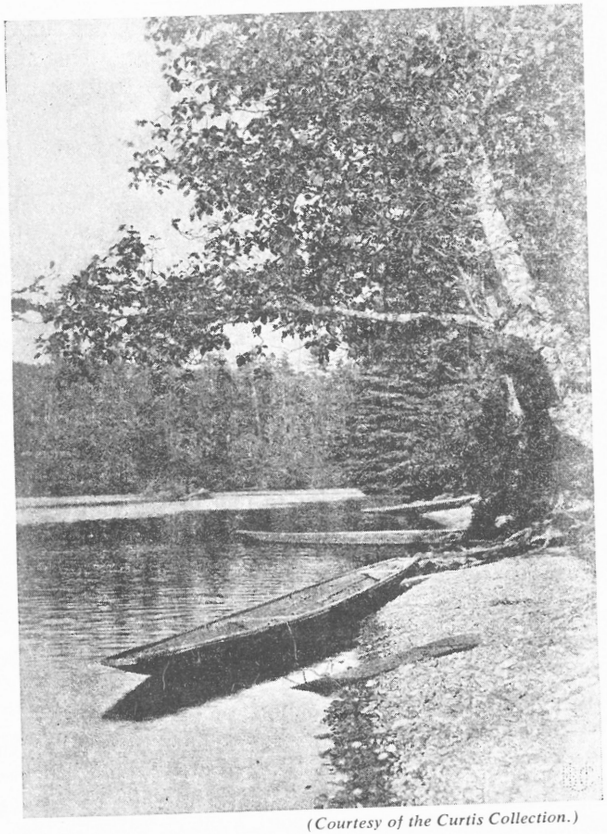
Nowhere was the western red cedar of greater service to the Coast people than in the building of their canoes. On this means of transport the lives of the community depended. It was indispensable for gathering their food and was practically their only means of communication between villages and neighbouring groups.

The building of a canoe was originally the work of a specialist—one who had the sympathy and co-operation of a supernatural assistant. Because of this belief, special rites were conducted, songs were sung, and taboos observed by both the man and his wife during the period of construction.

Privacy, which was observed to some extent during the entire period, was insisted upon during the more critical phases, such as the first splitting of the log, and the steaming and spreading of the sides. The skill and experience of the canoe-maker becomes evident at this point. When the canoe was first hollowed out, the bottom was left bellied up in the centre and a similar line allowed to the gunwales. This form was given to allow for spreading, a process which in some cases added as much as 2 feet to the original width of the log. Thus a log 3 feet in width might become a canoe with a 5-foot beam.

The actual spreading was done by lighting a fire around the outside of the canoe at a distance which would heat the wood but not scorch it. The interior was then filled with water, which was heated with hot stones. This softened the fibres and allowed for the stretching and spreading of the sides. Wooden bars of gradually increased length were forced in until the desired width was obtained, after which narrow thwarts were attached to the sides to hold them in position until the wood cooled and became rigid. Unclean persons, or those associated with evil spirits, were warned to stay clear of the project. Nearly all the tools already mentioned were used in the process of canoe-making. Fire, controlled by damp sand, was the principal means of shaping the interior in rough. The D-adze was used for the final shaping, and the fine work was done with chisels held in elk-horn handles. The surface finishing was usually effected by rubbing with the rough part of a dogfish skin.

There were two models of the original Salish canoes, one belonging to the Mainland and the other to Vancouver Island. Both of these were made from half-logs and therefore lacked the beautiful form of high stem and stern characteristic of the ocean-going canoes of the Haidas.



(Courtesy of the Curtis Collection.)

Coast Salish dugout.

Paddles were made of maple or yew and were of several different patterns, a distinction being made between paddles for men and those for women.

Many other forms of woodworking were part of the Salish culture. *Water-pails, cooking-boxes, storage-boxes,* and *coffins* were all made from the wood of the ubiquitous red cedar.

In making the water-tight boxes, single boards were bent to form all four sides. The first step was to measure the boards carefully and to groove them across the grain at the point where they were to be bent. They were then steamed by a process of heating them with hot rocks, covering them with seaweed, and keeping this soaked with water. By renewing the hot rocks and adding more water, the steaming was maintained for many hours until the fibres of the board were sufficiently pliable for bending. The extreme edges, being brought together and fitted by bevelling, were then sewn with spruce-root. The bottom of

the box was made from a thick board in which a step approximately half the thickness was cut around the outside edge. This allowed half the thickness of the board to fit snugly inside the walls of the box and provided a solid lip on which the walls could rest. The joint thus made was so carefully done that these boxes were quite capable of holding large quantities of water.

Large *dishes,* wooden *spoons,* and other *utensils* were also carved from solid pieces of wood. Although these were usually without ornamentation, yet the lines of the main design had a simple dignity, which reflects great credit on the craftsmen. Most of such carving was done with wood of the broad-leaved maple or that of the red alder.

III. Basketry

Among the Salish people generally, the art of basketry was well developed. The beauty of their products and the meticulous care given to minute details of design show outstanding craftsmanship, and their coiled basketry, at least, is superior to that of any of the surrounding tribes. In many other ways—in the ingenious methods devised for ornamentation and in a certain poetic idealism expressed by their designs, each one of which suggests some story or aspect of their daily lives—one is aware of a native artistic capacity of considerable scope.

Two main methods of basket-making were used by the Coast Salish:—

(1) Weaving on a warp foundation, or woven basketry.
(2) Sewing on a foundation of rods, splints, or bundles, or coiled basketry.

Each of these main methods was subject to considerable variation, giving rise to a subdivision in which the woven basketry develops as (*a*) twined and (*b*) twilled forms. The products of the former took the form of soft-rush bags and openwork, wrapped-twine baskets for carrying roots or clams and, in larger application, for the manufacture of fish-traps. Twilled work, on the other hand, generally took the form of pouches, sewing-baskets, or hold-alls.

Coiled basketry is, in turn, subdivided according to the nature of the various coil foundations on which the sewing was done. These were (*a*) rods, (*b*) splints, and (*c*) bundle or multiple coils.

For burden-baskets or general utility, the wide splint foundation was often used, but for water-tight baskets, intended for cooking purposes, the bundle or multiple-coil principle was applied.

In the coiled process, the foundation bundles or splints were wound in a continuous spiral form, inch by inch, while being sewn together with an overcast stitching of root or grass thread. The thread was whipped around the upper bundle or splint and passed through a hole pierced in the lower, drawing the two together. The part of the coil

being sewn was pressed together with the fingers while the binding strand was pulled tight with the teeth. So tightly were these baskets sewn that when held to the light no aperture or crevice was apparent, and when further swollen by soaking they were completely water-tight, requiring no application of pitch or gum, as was often the case with those made by other Indian groups.

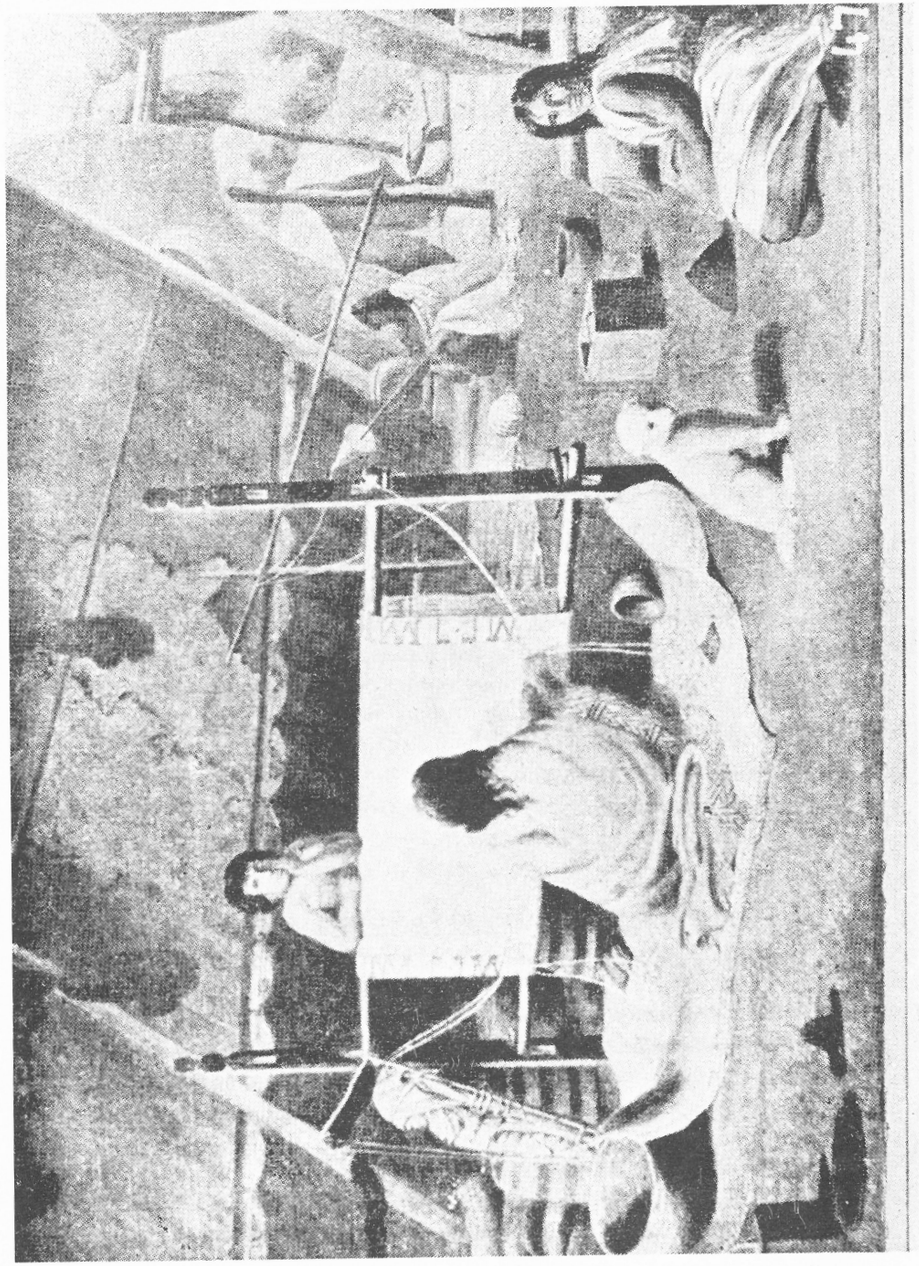
Although the roots of many kinds of trees and plants were used for the coiled basketry of the Salish, the small trailing roots of the cedar were considered the best material. These were dug from the older trees because of their greater toughness, and if not to be used at once were placed in damp ground or water to prevent them from becoming brittle. When ready, the women would split these roots lengthwise into the desired thickness, depending on the type of basket to be made. Short pieces, which split out unevenly and were too short for threads, were put aside for building up the core of foundation. The splitting completed, each splint or strand was doubled into a loose knot and placed in a container of water until needed. Many cedar-root baskets outlasted the generation in which they were made, and there are in existence to-day several which are known to have been in use for nearly half a century.

The process by which designs were worked on the material of the basket is termed *imbrication.* The term means to overlap and this is precisely the method used. By this means, strips of coloured bark or straw were overlapped upon the overcast stitching which binds the foundation coils together. According to some authorities on the subject, the distribution of this particular technique of ornamentation is extremely limited, and appears to be a unique accomplishment of one or two basket-making groups west of the Rocky Mountains and north of the Columbia River.

IV. Textiles

From the weaving of baskets to the weaving of mats, skirts, robes, and blankets is not a great step. Most anthropologists consider basketry as the foundation of all subsequent development in the textile arts. Although both basketry and loom-weaving had utility as their primary objective, the mere fact that robes and blankets made of goat and dog wool became associated with ideas of personal adornment and class distinction gave the weavers of these products greater scope for artistic expression.

Salish textiles were produced from various natural fibres, in which rushes and cedar-bark played a dominant part, at least among the common people. Other elements used for better-class articles were wool from the mountain-goat and from a breed of domestic dog raised for



Paul Kane painting of Coast Salish blanket weaving. *(Original in the Royal Ontario Museum.)*

this purpose. Duck-down and cotton from fireweed and other plants were often mixed with these to give a finer quality to the work.

The wool of the dog is much finer than that of the goat, and the yarns produced from it are very much like those of a fine-grade commercial wool. Extant examples of these blankets are beautifully patterned and suggest a technique in which needles are used. Hand-made needles of metal which have been found close to the surface of the ground are evidence of this, as also, perhaps, are the eyed bone needles which have been found in the lower strata of some of the shell-mounds of the area. The collection, preparation, and weaving of the material into a blanket of conventional design required, according to some authorities, about one year.

In weaving the wool blankets, the wool was first treated to remove the grease. For this purpose, a quantity of diatomaceous earth was prepared by burning and was then beaten into the wool with a wooden sword-like implement, after which the wool was washed and hung up to dry.

After a rough carding, the wool was placed in baskets and from there drawn out in continuous lengths to be rolled into a rough thread on the thigh of the worker. When a supply of this was ready, two baskets of it were placed side by side, their two ends joined, and they were wound together on a stick to form a ball from the inside of which the joined ends could be pulled out.

The spinning was done on a spindle, a rod 3 or 4 feet long placed through the centre of a whorl, a circular disc of wood or bone 8 or 9 inches in diameter which fitted tightly on the spindle about two-thirds of the way down its shaft. The whorl acted both as a fly-wheel to aid the rotation of the spindle and as a collar against which the finished product was wound. The two joined ends of the ball of thread were attached to the spindle at the whorl, which was then rotated, winding the two threads together into a rough yarn. To maintain the tension on the threads, it was passed over a bar or through a ring before being attached to the spindle.

The loom on which this material was woven consisted of two horizontal rollers supported in slots cut in wooden uprights set in the ground. Although not always used, the alternate strands of the warp were often kept apart by a simple heddle of thin wood to allow the hand to pass through. The warp was run around these rollers in a series of continuous cords so that the web could frequently be pulled around to a convenient position for the weaver, who always wove from the top downwards.

The technique used in weaving the goat-wool blanket was similar to that of twilled basketry, in which the weft crosses the warp in the sequence of over two and under one.

RELIGION

Like most other primitive people, the Coast Salish lived in a world filled with many spirit forms—guardian spirits, transformers, supernatural beings, and demi-gods of various powers and jurisdictions. Although generally, throughout the coastal groups, there is a suggestion of a " Creator of the World," he does not appear to have been omnipotent and frequently required aid from near-equals who had concurrent jurisdiction in some fields. The greater part of the natives' attention was directed toward the lesser powers and guardian spirits which usually took the outward form of some species of the animal kingdom, or less frequently were connected with some topographical feature of the countryside.

The association of religious feelings with subsistence sources, landscape features, and, in fact, the entire gamut of material culture arose from the belief that all animate and inanimate objects contained rational spirits, which, by adopting the proper approach, men could influence on their own behalf. Thus implements were handled with more than ordinary care lest they be unwilling to co-operate in the desired work, and magical rites were performed prior to the hunting of animals so that the spirit of the animal sought, or that of the genus to which he belonged, should not be offended. Examples of such rituals are those previously mentioned in connection with canoe-building and the first-fruit ceremonies such as the salmon ritual. Many local taboos were the result of such deference to animistic powers at certain seasons of the year.

Among the Coast Salish, as among most of the other coastal groups, there was no ritualistic worship of a Supreme Being. Nor was there any concept of a dualistic moral code of " good *vs.* evil " in the abstract sense. To greater extent than in our own " civilized " society, the Indians seem to have accepted the adage of " one man's meat is another's poison." Thus their efforts to influence the spirit world were directed toward gaining what was " meat " for themselves and their own community. It is true that some dances were performed in honour of a supernatural " Old Man " or " Great Chief," but the general practice of these people was to seek close relations with the lesser spirits of the external world, whose more tangible forms inspired greater confidence that their co-operation could be gained.

To the Coast Salish the soul of a man was twofold. The first and most important part was that indestructible spark which, once departed, went to the sunset where it remained forever. That which was left behind was the earthly body and its shadows, the latter of which had a three-part existence and hung about the earthly scene with either good or evil intent, depending upon the character of the person in life.

Their concept of " heaven " appears to have been a land where the weather was neither hot nor cold, where food abounded, and the people lived in a state of continuous festivity.

Personal guardian spirits and clairvoyance were sought by means of set standards of behaviour. Particularly among the ruling class, parents and guardians took care that children should observe a proper pattern of conduct in such matters. Thus a young boy, ambitious to become a " big " man in the community, would be schooled so that when the time came he would be ready to go out alone at night to seek the vision which would reveal to him the identity of his personal spirit or power. Preparation for this involved many rules of personal purity in thought, word, and deed. Although he had no hint as to the exact nature of the power which was to possess him, he was allowed to seek his revelation in the most likely places—such as near bodies of water, where all kinds of helpful spirits supposedly resided. Such powers might make the seeker a good seal-hunter, or might give him control over the elements. High esteem was given to those who had acquired the " wolf power," because they were supposedly destined to become great hunters. These spirit gifts were not restricted to any one person, since many men were believed to be possessed of the same power.

Several attempts might have to be made before the spirit power was revealed and accepted, hence the results were held in great secrecy until the proper time came to disclose them. An accident, fright, or unusual occurrence might precipitate the revelation, during which the seeker, usually weak with fasting and endeavour, saw a vision and heard a song which became his personal " property." Among some groups, if the seeker found himself bleeding at the mouth after his experience, he then knew that he was possessed of " war power " and was capable of becoming a good shaman.

The newly endowed youth had to accept his revelation modestly, hiding his newly acquired gift until the time of the winter ceremonies. At this time he donned a special head-dress of goat's wool and appeared before his people to sing his song, in which they all joined as a form of congratulation.

SHAMANISM

Shamans have been referred to as an " unorganized priesthood." They were the leaders, or at least played a leading part, in all the ceremonial functions.

The pattern of shamanism, as of many other cultural features, was not consistent throughout the entire Coast Salish area, therefore it can be described only in its general aspects.

It is not to be supposed that all shamans were tricksters and cheats. On the contrary, particularly during his early years, sincere belief in himself and his powers was a marked virtue of the " medicine-man." Two classes of shamans or " doctors " existed—those who were supreme in the arts of clairvoyance, the curing of the sick, and the control of ghosts and shadows of men, and those who held lesser powers and concerned themselves with minor illnesses and the warding off of adverse influences. These latter were usually women, who applied themselves mostly to the practice of midwifery.

Once the shaman-to-be received the sign of his calling (the bleeding at the mouth or other special signs), he had to continue to lead an exemplary life if he hoped his powers to increase. The animal which was revealed to him as his guardian spirit became his relative and could be invoked by him whenever help was needed. During his life, he tested himself again and again, and among some groups, such as the Cowichan and the Nanaimo, shamans were required to become repossessed of their power each succeeding season.

Before he could ever hope to effect cures in others he had to be strong enough to repel all evil influences from himself. To this end, he regulated all his thoughts and daily actions. Before being accepted as a shaman who could accept fees for his work, the novice had to prove his power in several demonstrations. Even then he returned periodically to the woods in order to gain additional powers and it was not until he had acquired all these that he was allowed to marry.

Disease was supposed to originate as an evil spirit which had penetrated whatever part of the body was suffering, or, in the case of loss of consciousness, because one or more of the person's shadows had gone astray. In the first instance, the shaman, working with songs, dances, and a bowl of water, which he sprinkled over the patient, endeavoured to draw out the evil spirit by sucking on the afflicted part. Proof of his success was often delivered by showing some object, conjured into his hand during the process, which supposedly had been extracted from the patient.

In life the shadows of a man could be brought under the control of shamans, and in the second instance the shaman, by invoking his own powers, could recapture the escaped shadows. The proof of his success lay only in the recovery of the patient.

MYTHOLOGY

Among primitive peoples, mythology and folk-tales take the place which modern society gives to literature. Although the written word was non-existent among the Salish, their interest in human affairs and physical phenomena was nevertheless keen and imaginative. Unfortunately, their accumulated knowledge and beliefs were transmitted to succeeding generations only through the elastic and unreliable medium of the verbally recorded myth.

The foundations of many of the myths of the Coast Salish are found among the legends of the inland plateau people, but are coloured by concepts and experiences gained in their new environment. Thus we have surviving on the coastal area one of the creation myths of the Interior, in which an " Old Man " walks the earth creating the outstanding features of the landscape, or altering conditions previously established by such supernatural " Transformers " as the Coyote and Raven.

The myths were a major part of the cultural heritage of the Indian. Not only were they recounted to the children and youths of the village with intense dramatic effects and gestures, but they also formed the basis of many of the ceremonial songs and dances, particularly those of them which were the personal " property " of certain individuals or families.

FAMILY LIFE

I. Kinship

Throughout the Coast Salish area, the patrilinear family was the recognized social unit. Groups of three or four families, all belonging to the same kinship group, inhabited one house and formed a household, which, in turn, belonged to one of the various clans, every member of which was supposedly descended from a common ancestor, no matter how mythical or remote.

In all important family undertakings, blood-ties constituted an obligation to assist. Potlatch and other festive expenses were expected to be shared, while the building of a house or the erection of a mortuary-pole called for the pooling of both labour and equipment by all members of the clan.

According to Jenness, the Coast Salish did not regard clan relationship as strictly as did the more northerly coastal groups. Marriage regulations were based only on the closeness of immediate kinship and were not concerned with the clan or village community involved. Neither did they follow the practice of dividing the communities into phratries, as did the Haida and Tsimshian people. Their village organization seems to have placed less emphasis on family ancestry, and the family crests and heraldic devices so important to the Northern Coast cultures were of little consequence to the Salish.

II. Inheritance

Contrary to the practice among the northern groups, such as the Haida and Tsimshian, the Coast Salish families were organized on a patrilineal basis. All real property, as well as dances, names, songs, etc., which were also regarded as property, were inherited from the father, and family descent was traced through the male line only. This rule was subject to partial exceptions, there being some recognition of a daughter's right to inherit on occasion. This, however, was quite exceptional, and depended not only on the personal aptitude of the heiress but also on the particular marital circumstances of the parents.

Eldest sons usually inherited the most valuable property, but again personal aptitudes and special abilities of younger sons often allowed them to share in such benefits.

III. Birth

Generally, but with some exceptions, a child born of commoner parents within Coast Salish society remained a commoner all his life, for no acquisition of riches nor feats of bravery could alter his social status. Thus individual initiative was given little encouragement, although the desire to rise above one's station may not have been considered an important incentive to personal accomplishment.

On the occasion of a birth, invitations were issued to the women of the village to attend at the house of the expectant mother. While there they prepared cedar-bark to be used as towelling and bedding for the child and were usually rewarded with pieces of mountain-goat blanket. The new-born babe was bathed in a wooden dish and his body massaged and rubbed with oil by the midwife. In the meantime, the father bathed and cleansed himself in order that the child might grow strong. Both parents refrained from eating salmon and were admonished by friends never to scold the child, in case he should decide to leave this earth. Also they were expected to be present on the fourth day after the birth, when the ceremonial piercing of the ears took place.

The new child did not receive the name he was to bear throughout life until he was old enough to have shown by his behaviour the measure of honour to which he was entitled. Very strict attention was given to the matter of honourable names, each family having a number of these in reserve, which were given out in accordance with the merits of each member of a new generation. The eldest child did not necessarily receive the most honourable name, unless he deserved it. While waiting for his permanent name, the child was called by a familiar pet name chosen according to his disposition or by the responses which he showed to the affections and instructions of his parents.

When a child arrived at the age of discretion, his father approached the chief for permission to give a feast or a potlatch in honour of the occasion. At this feast all the family prerogatives and privileges were displayed, including such dances and songs as the father was entitled to perform. During the feast the permanent name of the child was formally announced and bestowed and this name was not changed, except on such an occasion as succession to chieftainship or attainment of some remarkable distinction.

IV. Marriage

As among all other peoples, lovers of the Coast Salish people were governed by rules and regulations peculiar to their society. As with ourselves, the social customs of the Indians varied in detail according to the rank of those concerned. Among the poorer classes the customs of marriage were comparatively simple, but among the higher classes great formality was given to such occasions.

Thus we see the Salish youth of rank visiting the house of the girl he desires to marry. He speaks no word, but seats himself close to the door and remains there for four days, fasting for that time. Besides lacking food he has to bear the abuse of the girl's parents, who take delight in reminding him of all his shortcomings and defects of character. This abuse he must bear in silence until the fourth day, when his patience seems to begin to count in his favour, and it is not until then that

the girl's mother offers him a mat to sit on. If the parents are wholly in favour of the marriage, they ask the chief or head of the house to invite the young man to sit by the fire, and by this action the youth knows that his suit is progressing favourably. A meal is cooked by the girl's mother and the boy is asked to join. Some of this food is then sent in dishes to the boy's parents, who, in turn, cook more food and reload the dishes to return to the prospective mother-in-law.

After these preliminaries are concluded, both families join in giving a great feast, which is held at the girl's house. The boy's parents come in their canoes laden with valuable presents, and many of the clan enter the procession as well. When the visiting party arrives, long speeches are made detailing the honours of the groom and his family and the feast commences. The feast over, the guests retire to their canoes and prepare for the reception of the bride. After she has made her adieus, the highest chief of her clan, dressed in full regalia and carrying a mat and an elaborately carved rattle made from sheep's horn or madrona-bark, leads her to where the groom is waiting to take her to his own village.

If the marriage was a success, the family of the bride made subsequent gifts to the family of the groom equal to those received at the time of the wedding. Marriages were not always a success and divorce not uncommon. Sometimes it occurred that the head man of the village decided the couple were of unequal rank for marriage, in which case a deputation of chiefs would visit the husband's parents and forcibly remove the wife back to her own family, thus creating a divorce.

Generally speaking, as compared to many other groups, the husband-wife relationship of the Coast Salish seems to have been fairly equitable, the duties and property being more or less equally divided. Tools, fishing and hunting equipment, the house, and canoe all belonged to the man, while ownership of all the domestic implements, loom, and basketwork equipment went to the wife, who retained these even after the death of her husband.

V. Death

Among the Salish, the gap between life and death did not hold such terrors as one might expect. One might say that a newly dead Salish Indian was not nearly so dead in the eyes of his contemporaries as a dead white man would be. The Salish belief in the imperishability of man's " spirit " was absolute and unquestioning. The deceased person was loath to leave his earthly home and lingered there as a " shadow " or ghost wistfully contemplating the joys of his past life. If the bonds of love between the dead and those remaining were very intense, it was thought to be within the powers of a shaman to recall the spirit back to the body. On the death of a chief, the whole tribe mourned for four

days and then, as though to rid themselves of their sadness, they all bathed before returning to normal life.

Widows and widowers of the recent dead showed their sorrow by painting their legs and their blankets red and refraining from active life. For four days they fasted, during which period they bathed frequently to purify themselves from the contamination of death. At the end of this time, food was brought to them by attendants of their own sex and the red blanket was taken away by an old man, who placed it secretly in the woods where it would never be seen again.

Meanwhile, the complicated ritual of the funeral took place. The face of the dead person had been painted red and black and his body placed in a box, which was raised on posts five feet above the ground. Sometimes the box was placed in a tree, 20 or 30 feet from the ground and the lower limbs of the tree removed. In other instances we find canoe burials, these sometimes being located on isolated islands or parts of the shore where permanent cemeteries were established.

VILLAGE LIFE

With evidence of the present-day " Indian reserve " in mind, it is difficult to conjure a mental picture of the life, activities, and outward aspects of the pre-European Indian village. Artists, such as Paul Kane, have left us some vivid sketches of village scenes, but even these show many evidences of the infiltration of white culture. Over 90 per cent of the village sites were established on low benches just above the high-water level of the sea or above the flood-level of the rivers. However, where large lakes and extensive river bottoms afforded convenient supplies of food and materials for industry, some outlying settlements were established. These occupational sites were of two kinds—the permanent winter encampment and the temporary camps set up on individual harvest grounds for the purpose of gathering seasonal food-supplies whether of roots, berries, clams, or fish. Generally, however, the " long houses " with their lean-to roofs and plank sides supported by slim poles, the small salmon caches of similar construction but raised 4 or 5 feet off the ground, the collection of canoes pulled up haphazardly on the beach, the ever-present dog, and the rubbish heap of sea-shells, kelp-ends, vegetable and fibre refuse, and broken implements are typical of the external village scene.

Inside the houses, the women spinning or weaving, the smouldering fires around which the men lolled after their duties, the assortments of baskets and wooden cooking-boxes, the child suspended by its cradle-board from a convenient pole, the compartments with their sleeping-benches and woven-matting screens all indicate a settled communal existence in which the bare necessities of life were obtained without too much difficulty or exertion.

At certain times, of course, such as when the fish were " running," the scene hummed with activity. There were fish to catch, dry, and store, oil to be extracted from the eulachons, and salmon heads to be rendered down. At other times there were the clams to be dug and cooked, camass and fern roots to be found, and in the spring of the year there were the young berries and green vegetable shoots to be gathered. Only during the winter was there any extended leisure and it was only during these cold-weather months that most of the games, dances, and other festivities took place.

In connection with seasonal activity, there were many major and minor rites to be performed in order that the spirits controlling the food sources should not be offended and the food-supply fail. Of these first-fruit ceremonies, the salmon ritual was the most important, concerning as it did the welfare of the whole community. In this ritual, great deference was shown toward the first fish taken, and every step, from the catching, cooking, eating, and disposing of the remains, was carefully and conventionally handled, accompanied by addresses of praise and appeals for a plentiful food-supply.

I. Social Classes

According to the earliest writers, there were four classes evident in Salish society—the princely caste, the nobles, the commoners, and the slaves. The princely castes had no crests, despite the fact that they set themselves apart from the rest of the community in social obligations and in marriage. They set the pattern of society and accepted without question their responsibilities as well as their privileges, and these, along with property and honours, passed in strict heredity from father to son.

The hereditary nobles had the same rules of descent and each of these families had its legend of the noble deeds of its ancestors, which were jealously guarded. Members of this class held the privilege of wearing masks at their dances, a custom which was one of the distinguishing marks of their social position.

Among the commoners there were two subclasses—commoners-ordinary and commoners-middle class. The distinction here was merely one of wealth, and one which could be overcome by a thrifty or fortunate individual. Thus a prosperous family head, after a succession of feasts and giving of goods, could acquire more honourable names for his children or those of his brother, and the succeeding generation thus attained full middle-class status.

Paul Kane, in his diary, remarks: " Slavery in its most cruel form exists among the Indians of the whole coast, from California to Behring's Straits." According to other authorities too, the custom of every family of any standing having several slaves, both male and female, to do the dirty and laborious work, prevailed everywhere among the coastal groups. Slaves could be acquired by purchase or by war and were almost invariably of the same stock as their owners—that is, Salish preyed upon Salish. Slaves were property and held no social status in the community. While their owners had complete power of life or death over them, and there are some instances of them suffering from this, it does not appear to have been the custom to sacrifice the slaves at the death of the master, as was the case with many pre-literate and some literate peoples in other parts of the world.

II. Personal Ornaments and Insignia

While dealing with the subject of social classes, it is interesting to note the customs by which it was indicated in the individual. By jewellery, clothing, head deformation, and, to a lesser extent, tattooing, the individual proclaimed his community status, although the latter method does not seem to have been a deeply rooted culture trait.

Head deformation, as a mark of honourable birth, was a widespread practice among the Salish Indians. During his first year, the child's forehead was subjected to pressure by means of a pad, over which rested a flat board to which weights were applied. In addition to this, the mother massaged the head in the direction of the desired form. Carried out during the first two or three years of a child's life, this shaping was permanent in its effect.

Middle-class social status was often emphasized by the use of paint on the body, and this medium was also used in particular colours and patterns to express emotions of grief and anger.

The ears and noses of both sexes of well-to-do people were pierced to receive abalone-shell, and other pendants and bone ornaments were worn around the wrists and ankles and neck. For this purpose, copper became a common material after the advent of the white man, when its scarcity value declined. For some reason, Dentalium shells, so prized in other parts of Canada, were known only to the Sanetch tribes.

III. Property

The real property of the Salish families consisted of houses, furniture, hunting and fishing rights, and all their manufactured goods, such as baskets and blankets. While the concept of ownership of land did exist, the idea of wealth attached to it existed only in the rights to take the fruits of that land. Each kinship group had its own gathering areas, which included both fishing and hunting grounds and the right to use these was both exclusive and hereditary. As previously mentioned, the mountain-goat hunting-grounds were usually restricted to use by the privileged classes. On the other hand, clam-digging grounds were communal and everyone was free to use them.

Details of property customs varied however, and we find, according to such authorities as Boas and Hill-Tout, that among the Songhees of the south-eastern tip of Vancouver Island each clan held ownership of certain strips of coast-line and river courses, but that such exclusive rights did not exist among the people of the Cowichan and Fraser River areas.

IV. Councils

As we have already stated, there was no political organization among the Coast Salish, and no co-ordination of leadership beyond a very loose feeling of mutual support among neighbours. All ruling power in a village was vested in the princely caste, of whom one was chosen as *Siam*. The Indian word is used here because the word "chief" carries connotations which are not applicable to the word *Siam*. In an emergency in which two or more related villages were concerned, one *Siam* might be elected as a councillor for that period. However, if

it was war, he was not expected to lead his forces; in fact, he was prevented from so doing.

The weakness in political unification over wide areas did not apply to local affairs. Here the ruling class was very conscious of its place in the community, and among themselves elected three or four councillors to see that behaviour commensurate with the dignity of their class was observed. This was usually accomplished through the respect and advancement given to young men of much self-discipline, and one can judge of its effectiveness by noting the stigma of shame and disgrace which applied to a young person who was guilty of a lapse of virtue.

It should be remembered that this apparent attempt to develop "character" in the youth was based less on a "moral" approach to life than on the necessity of maintaining class and family prestige, through insistence on a certain code of behaviour—one which would differentiate the ruling castes from the common people and slaves. One of the results of this is seen in the dignified hospitality and ceremony with which members of the upper classes treated each other. The continual practice of holding councils and applying certain precepts brought about a standard of conduct which was rigidly observed. This gave a stabilization to communal affairs through a sense of mutual obligation and communal honour, based, of course, on their own moral code, which not only permeated their own class but to some extent governed the conduct of the lower social groups.

V. Education

Very small children were in the charge of their respective mothers, who had to answer to their husbands for the child's behaviour. But as they grew up the young ones came under the care of relatives of their own sex. The place of what we would consider formal education was taken by a gradual inculcation of ideas connected with cultural traditions. Thus the young child's life was not entirely carefree, since he had to observe the various taboos and general etiquette of his society. The old men of the village took care to instruct the growing lads in the work for which they showed the most aptitude and also in the honourable conduct traditional to their class. Such instruction was designed to lead up to that crucial point in a boy's life when he was made to undergo a test of his manhood at the puberty rites. Ability in all the manly arts was a necessary prerequisite to honourable status and to aid in acquiring such ability many small weapons and even canoes were manufactured, suitable to the size and strength of the growing boy at various stages of his development.

In a similar way, girls were instructed in all the womanly arts of basket and textile weaving, the making of clothes, and the cooking of food. The spiritual preparation leading up to the climax of a girl's life

at the puberty rites was manifested in the strict observance of a complex system of taboos and formulæ designed to accord with the distinction of her lineage. The proper observance of these rules and ceremonies was indispensable to the making of an honourable marriage.

VI. The Potlatch

The potlatch was a gift-giving ceremony by which the leader of a kinship group invited guests to witness a demonstration of his family prerogatives and honourable privileges, and among the coastal groups was the only method whereby an increase in social position could be achieved. Succession to a leading position in the village or household, the raising of a mortuary pole, the building of a new house, or the taking of new and more honourable names each required the giving of a potlatch before community approval was obtained.

Since the prerogatives to be displayed were the heritage of a clan or of a certain section of a clan, it follows that the donor group was automatically limited. But since village groups were mostly collections of loosely related families, the success of potlatches was also a matter of community prestige, and this sense of local loyalty made it obligatory for everyone—nobles and commoners—to give material and active support to the ceremony.

There was also an important economic aspect to the potlatch system. The recitation of specific claims by the chief or village archivist had to be given tangible evidence in the form of a display of riches on a relatively immense scale. In order to demonstrate that these accumulations were but a particle of his ultimate resources, the donor or his agent made a public distribution of them down to the utmost item which he and his supporters had worked months to assemble. Only by this means could his claims be proved conclusively to the community.

By reason of the strong hold the rules of potlatch had upon these people, the donating family, although often reduced to a state of destitution, were actually looked upon as being richer and more socially influential than before. Among those Coast Salish in close contact with the Kwakiutl culture to the north, the spirit of potlatch was such that no man would accept another's gifts unless it was his intent to make returns to the full value of the gift with a generous surplus to boot. But rejection of a gift was an admission of inability to maintain one's social status—an unthinkable gesture! Among the more southerly situated villages of the Coast Salish, this aspect of potlatch was less prevalent, the social pressure to repay operating less strongly. Nevertheless, the fact remained that a man who had potlatched could at some future date, because of his increased social position, expect considerable returns on his original "investment."

The evening before a potlatch was given, guests from far and near arrived in ceremonial attire. They were fed and accorded every mark of hospitality. In the meantime, a plank was placed across two canoes or a platform erected in front of the chief's house from which the speeches were to be made and the presents distributed. Ceremonial songs and dances were performed during the potlatch, and after the distribution was completed games and friendly contests took place.

The potlatch was a primary social and economic culture trait all along the North-west Coast and was well established among the Coast Salish. A potlatch was never given with the object of satisfying the hunger or needs of the people; it was used solely as a means to establish on a material basis the claims of family honour. Face-saving potlatches, whereby a man covered up a disgrace, and rivalry potlatches, given to humiliate an enemy, were individual outgrowths and not basic aspects of the system.

VII. Secret Societies and Ceremonies

Secret societies among the Salish were neither so numerous nor so well organized as were those of the northern tribes. In fact, it appears that such societies were largely the result of culture transfer. Thus among the Comox, near neighbours of the Kwakiutl, there was a great variety of such societies, having been borrowed directly from the Kwakiutl. In addition to these, the Comox also had a number of subsocieties named after the Thunderbird and various animals and birds.

Among the Songhees, Boas reported two main societies—the Nontlem and one other which was subdivided into five divisions, each of which was distinguished by the nature of their dances, being either wild, slow, jumpy, or performed with peculiar body postures and arm movements.

Farther south, on the Puget Sound and Fraser River area, secret societies were scarce and not highly regarded. This appears to support the theory that the secret-society complex was not native to the Salish, but merely the result of contact with the neighbouring Kwakiutls.

In considering the function of these societies, it must be remembered that they were basically religious. Initiation played an important part and novices were required to be of pure mind and unimpeachable behaviour. Hence most of the novices were adolescents, the names of many being entered on the probation list while their owners were very young, their fathers acting as their sponsors.

The probationer, once granted entry, spent his nights in the woods where he bathed frequently. While he was gone, his mother worked new mountain-goat wool blankets and cedar-bark ornaments for him, and on his return his father gave a five-day feast. During the feast, dances were performed to which all people were admitted. The society

members occupied one side of the house. They were dressed in regalia of cedar-bark ornaments; their faces were blackened to emphasize the solemnity of the occasion; and their hair was strewn with down to indicate inward rejoicing. At the end of the five days, the novice underwent a ceremonial bathing in the sea and again retired to the woods for further experience of privation and exposure, returning only from time to time for instruction in the rites of the society. This woods-dwelling period was terminated by the revelation of a spirit—kindred to the society—which was to guard and guide the youth in all his future ways.

The novice then returned to his house, where another feast accompanied by a potlatch was given. At this time the graduate performed his first dance, showing himself to the people as a full-fledged member of the society.

It might be added that entry into many of the secret societies was restricted to sons of rich men because of the heavy payments and lavish entertainment requirements.

The animal masks used on these occasions are not native to the Salish, but are diffusions from the northern tribes. The only mask which is truly Salish is the *Schwy-why,* the use of which was limited to the Nanaimo and Cowichan area and its adjacent Mainland. The wearing of this mask was the inherited privilege of certain sections of the upper classes.

VIII. Recreation—Games, Songs, and Dances

Most games took place during the winter season, or at least after a plentiful food-supply had been gathered. Some, such as cat's-cradle and shuttlecock, were played between individuals without attracting many spectators. Others, especially those which involved gambling, were attended by many people, who took sides, often singing songs to encourage their own players. Large public attendances, accompanied by much singing, was the custom at inter-village games.

Men and women each had their own games which were peculiar to their sex and which they played in the privacy of their houses, and it was usually considered indecent for any of the opposite sex to attend or watch these.

Outdoor games were usually played by the men. Two popular games were a sort of shinny, played with a crooked or clubbed stick, and one in which the players used a stick to catch and throw a small hoop. Others were connected with ability in hunting, such as shooting arrows through a loop and tossing spears at a stake.

Most of the indoor games were guessing games or games of chance, of which the Indians throughout the Coast area were very fond. One of the most popular of these was known as *Lehal,* which was played with two ornamented sticks or bones short enough to be concealed in the

hand. This was a favourite type of inter-village challenge. Opposing sides of twelve members lined up on opposite sides of the camp-fire, and, amid much singing and board drumming, the bones were juggled from hand to hand and from player to player of one team until a selected member of the opposing team pointed to indicate which player had them and in which hand. The game was scored with pins, of which there were usually ten or twenty to each side, and the game was finished when one side had won all the pins.

The mid-winter ceremonies of the Coast Salish were times of general dancing and feasting, often lasting many weeks. During such festivities the partitions of the long houses were removed and the whole house turned into a huge hall to better accommodate the performers and audience.

To European ears the tones and cadences of Indian music are often indistinguishable from mere noisemaking, and the marking of rhythmic, pulsating patterns seems to be its only claim to the term. However, the coastal tribes appeared to have had a separate rhythm of peculiar quality for each song, of which there were a variety to cover every range of human emotions. A few words, or a short phrase referring to an event or the feelings of the performer, were repeated rhythmically over and over, but the musical merits of such would be difficult for our ears to appreciate.

The Coast Salish used a variety of musical instruments. Although not capable of producing the even cadences which we associate with the word, their purpose was to produce different qualities of sound in rhythmic patterns. Skin and wooden drums were common, but a more popular method used ordinary planks raised off the ground and beaten with heavy sticks. Wooden and scallop-shell rattles shaken by the hand, and deer-hoof rattles which were attached to the wrists and ankles of the dancers gave forth a mixture of jingling sounds, as did the small club-like wooden ornaments which were worn suspended in well-arranged patterns from the shirts of the performers. Bull roarers, so common throughout the area, were used only by the boys of the village for the special purpose of calling for rain and therefore are not classed under this heading.

Dances of our West Coast Indians were in general pantomime performances. Only in one or two groups do we find demonstrations of culture myths. Masked animal dances were customary, the solemnity of these being relieved by the use of clowns, who weaved in and out among the dancers, adding a touch of the ludicrous to the occasion. The dance costumes of some of the secret societies were highly ornate affairs of swan feathers attached to shirts and swan-skin leggings. Under the flickering light of camp-fires such costumes created an ethereal effect quite in keeping with the supernatural significance of the performance.

IX. Design and Decoration

The practice of associating the decoration of an object with the purpose for which it was to be used was common among the Coast Salish. While their art forms were simpler than those of their northern neighbours, and of less symbolic significance, this did not detract from the evidence of their skill in this work. Spoons and ladles, although for the most part unornamented, were carved to lines of simplicity and proportion. Fishing equipment was frequently decorated with forms designed to aid as a lure to the fish. Grease dishes were often decorated with figures of the animals from which the grease was obtained. One of the arts in which the men of the Coast Salish excelled was the carving

Salish spinning-whorl.

of spinning whorls, the design being adapted cleverly to the purpose, contour, and surface of the implement. All art forms indicate an imaginative approach to the problem of achieving balance and symmetry through conventional designs.

X. Large Wood-carvings and Totem-poles

It appears likely that when the Salish first came to the Coast area the art of wood-carving was little developed among them. By the time of the first European contact with these people, however, the custom seems to have filtered through from the north, although the full heraldic significance of this art form was never fully appreciated by them. In their early work their efforts were directed to the memorial of individuals, expressed in the form of single or sometimes two superimposed human figures. These were erected on burial sites or close to the dwellings and were sometimes accompanied by guardian-spirit designs on the house front.

Animal forms, such as that of the seal, sea-lion, beaver, and otter, were occasionally represented on house posts, beam ends, and ceremonial coffins, and generally referred to some major event which had occurred to the owner.

INTERGROUP RELATIONS

I. Territorial Rights

The exclusive rights of tribal and family groups to gather the produce of certain areas were jealously held and guarded, although by the advent of Europeans such conventions were so well established and accepted that violations rarely occurred. Even the shifting of whole villages to new sites did not cancel such ownership. Consequently, it was not unusual to find one group migrating to relatively distant parts at certain times of the year in order to take advantage of such rights, even though the area in question had been occupied subsequently by another group.

II. Transportation Routes

Although minor trails existed plentifully around the main camps and villages, and some long trails of ancient origin were maintained, few, if any, of these were used for transportation of goods other than for the necessity of portaging between waterways. The encumbrances to trails caused by deadfall and brush and the irregularities of the terrain were potent factors in preventing the extensive development of land transportation. Hence it may be said that, as far as the Coast Salish were concerned, practically all transportation was water-borne.

III. Trade

The barter system of exchange was, of course, the custom, and trade was carried on to an appreciable extent. Rather definite standards of value existed over wide areas, these being calculated in slaves, coppers, hides, blankets, and money-shells, the latter being gathered in great quantities by the Coast people for this specific purpose. The wealthier classes, by their eagerness to own costly ornamental materials such as native copper, abalone-shell, and ivory, aided in establishing an active trade between rather distant culture groups.

It is difficult to know whether the trading of pre-European days was merely the result of accidental surpluses or whether such surpluses were purposely accumulated with a view to trading possibilities. Our knowledge of potlatch customs, however, indicates that accumulation of goods beyond the bare immediate or future needs of the family was customary. There are also indications that specialization existed to some degree among related villages and clans, where the particular aptitudes, skills, or gathering rights of separate groups might have made specialization and mutual trade the common practice for subsistence purposes.

Between the Mainland and the Gulf Islands much trade was maintained during latter times. The Sanetch and Songhees of Vancouver Island traded with the Klallum of Washington, and the Nanaimo and Cowichan with the Squamish of the adjacent Mainland. Friendly visits

to alien territory were quite common among all tribes and on these occasions considerable interchanges of goods took place. Some overland trade with the Interior tribes was established by the coastal people, but it is probable that such trade was negligible in earlier times and only developed to any extent under the increased security of European control.

IV. Warfare

Owing to the respect paid to rights of ownership and use of land areas, and the rigidity with which these rights and their boundaries were already defined at the time of the European discoveries, war for the purpose of territorial seizure was an extremely rare occurrence. Besides this, the lack of political organization between villages and tribal groups was an added factor against warfare on any grandiose scale.

Such warfare as did occur was merely a type of semi-buccaneering project in which revenge for slights or the acquisition of slaves were the principal motives. Such action called for constant reprisals and the use of surprise tactics after the " hit and run " fashion. Open battles were avoided, the object being to attack one's enemies by night and by stealth, striking and retiring with a maximum of booty before the camp could be aroused and aid rendered. These raiding tactics naturally called for much close fighting, with the consequent use of clubs, daggers, and short spears as the main weapons of warfare.

CONCLUSION

Throughout these pages we have tried to trace, as simply and concisely as possible, most of the major aspects of Coast Salish life, and to present a reasonably clear picture of their culture as it must have appeared to the early traders and settlers.

The following extract from C. Hill-Tout's book *Native Races of the British Empire* may help to round out that picture and to emphasize some of the most important points regarding the primitive life of our native peoples—that it was organized, relatively stable, and admirably adapted to the local environment:—

> The members of the Salish stock were, before contact with the Europeans, a well-regulated, peace-loving virtuous people, whose existence was far from being squalid or miserable. The great age to which both men and women formerly lived shows the vigor of the race. . . . It was no uncommon thing a generation or two ago to see four or five generations of the same family living together under the same roof. . . . The aged were always sure of kindness and consideration at the hands of their kindred—family affection being a strong trait among these tribes. Even the women . . . had by no means, at any rate among the Salish tribes, a hard time . . . their voices customarily had a large share in all that concerned the family and also to some extent the tribal life.
>
> The life then of the Western Indian, as it was lived in the earlier days, was not that of a vicious and degraded savage. He had advanced many stages beyond that when we first came in contact with him, and his life, though simple and rude, was on the whole well-ordered and happy, and if his wants and aspirations were few, so also were his cares and worries.

APPENDICES

Appendix A.—Some Typical Coast Salish Legends

How Bluejay Brought the Dead Girl to Life*

Once Bluejay was very anxious to have a certain girl for his wife. Her father was a chief in the country under the water, and neither he nor his daughter favoured Bluejay's suit. But Bluejay kept urging her, and at last threatened to kill her if she would not come with him. The girl still refused, however, and told Bluejay to do his worst, that she would not have him; and both her parents backed her up and said, "Don't take him! He's no good at all."

Not long after this the girl fell sick, and though many medicine-men tried to cure her none of them could do anything, and she died. Her people mourned for her and placed her body on a scaffolding. Bluejay heard that the girl was dead, and after five days had passed he said, "I will go and see what I can do for her." So he came and saw where she lay on the scaffolding, wrapped in blankets and mats, and with great quantities of blankets and goods of all sorts around the grave, for her father was a very rich man.

At night Bluejay came to the grave and called to the girl, "Get up! Get up!" He heard the body move slightly on the scaffolding and then he knew he could bring her to life, and was glad. So he took off the blankets and mats in which the body was wrapped and pulled it out, and it only smelled a little. He carried her to his canoe and started up the river. Whenever he came to a rapid, he stopped and sang his *tamanous* song and washed the body and then went on up-stream. By the time he had done this the third time, the body hardly smelled at all. At the fourth rapid the girl began to get warm. When they reached the fifth rapid Bluejay shook the canoe and said to the girl, "Get up! Get up! We are almost home." And the girl sat up. Then Bluejay fixed her eyes and her breath and told her to stand up and walk, and she did so. "Well, are you awake now? Do you know me?" asked Bluejay. "As soon as we pass these rapids we shall be at my house. I am your lover, and don't you ever try to run away from me now, for if you do you will die."

The girl did not know that she had been dead; she thought she had been asleep. When they reached Bluejay's house the girl was glad to get there, for she was tired. And Bluejay took her in and said, "Now, if your father or mother come to take you away, don't go with them, for you will surely die if you do."

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* Livingston Farrand, *Traditions of the Quinault Indians.* (Publication of the Jesup North Pacific Expedition, Vol. II, Pt. iii.) New York, 1902, pp. 105–106.

Not long after someone did happen in at Bluejay's house, and when he saw her he wondered and asked if Bluejay had brought her to life. Bluejay said he had. The girl heard then for the first time that she had been dead and asked Bluejay if it were true, and he answered, "Yes, I took you from the grave."

When the news reached her home the girl's father would not believe it until he went to the grave and saw that it had been disturbed and that the body was gone. Then the people gathered and talked it all over and said, "Let us go to Bluejay's and get her back." So they went up to Bluejay's house and found the girl in bed. Her father said to her, "Come, my daughter, get up and come with us." Bluejay sat still and never said a word. The girl got up and asked her father, "Did I really die?" "Yes," he told her, "and now I want you to come back with me." "But," said the girl, "if I go back with you I shall die again." "Never mind," replied her father, "come with me." All this time Bluejay never said a word. So they started for the canoes, the girl leading the way out of the house while Bluejay followed last. As they pushed off Bluejay called after her, "Now be sure you get a good man this time, for your father says I am no use."

When they got the girl home, they gave her food, but she could not eat. They put her in her old bed and she immediately went to sleep. Next morning her mother called her to get up and wash and get something to eat; but the girl did not answer, and when they went over to her they saw that she was dead. Then her family felt worse than ever and wept and mourned. Some of the people were angry at the way her father had acted and told him he ought to go up and see Bluejay again and get him to cure her.

So he sent a message to Bluejay saying, "We want you to come and doctor my daughter, for she is dead again, and this time if you cure her you can have her for your wife." But Bluejay said to the messengers, "No. Tell them to get her a good man. I'm no good, you know, and I won't go." The messengers went back and told the girl's father what Bluejay had said, and some one proposed, "Let's offer lots of blankets and the girl too, if he will cure her." So they went up again with lots of blankets. But Bluejay said, "No, I won't cure her again. I am no good. I don't want your blankets. If any medicine-man hereafter should do as I did, the people would act the same way. After this the medicine-men can doctor the sick, but not the dead. If people are once dead they shall remain so forever." And he refused to do anything.

If her father had let the girl stay as Bluejay's wife all medicine-men could bring the dead to life again to-day. As it is, they can do nothing.

The Ascent to the Sky*

Once Raven's two daughters went out on the prairie to dig roots, and night came on before they knew it so that they had to camp out where they were. And as they lay talking under the open sky they came to speak of the stars, and the younger one said, "I wish I were up there with that big bright star." And the older said, "I wish I were there with that little star." Soon they fell asleep and when they waked up they found they were up in the sky country where the stars are, and the younger girl found that her star was a feeble old man, while the elder sister's star was a young man.

The younger girl was afraid of the old man, and after a short time she ran away and came to an old woman named Spider, who had a great fat belly and was sitting making rope which she put into a basket. In answer to the girl's question, Spider said she was making the rope to use when going down to the earth. Then the girl begged the old woman to let her use the rope to help her get back to earth, for she was unhappy with the old man. He was sick and his eyes were sore and running and he used her hair to wipe them with, and altogether she was home-sick and miserable. Spider told her she would let her use the rope but not until the basket was filled, so the girl went back to the old man to wait.

Every day she would go over to Spider and ask for the rope, and each time Spider would tell her to wait until the basket was filled for then there would be enough rope to reach the earth, but if she went sooner there would not be enough and she would certainly be killed. The girl kept insisting, until at last Spider gave way and told her she could use it though she felt sure it would take another day's work to make it reach. However, the girl said she would risk it. So Spider tied the rope under her arms and started to let her down gradually. Down and down she came until, when she was almost down to the earth, the rope came to an end. Now she had come down just over her father's house, and all the people, when they looked up, wondered what that thing was hanging in the air. So there she hung, day after day, until she died. Then her clothes began to drop down about her father's house, and then her bones, until one day Bluejay picked some up, and looking at them said he thought they belonged to Raven's daughter. So he called Raven and they both decided it was so, and they gathered together all the fragments and then called upon all the people and all the animals and all the birds and fishes to gather and make an attack upon the Sky People to recover the other sister.

They all gathered together and a small bird cried out, "Come down, come down, O Sky!" And the sky came down closer. Each time the bird called the sky came closer, but finally it stopped while still a long way off. Then they consulted as to how to reach the sky and at last

* Farrand, op. cit., pp. 107–108.

decided to shoot at it. So they prepared a bow of the trunk of a white cedar and an arrow of a limb of a tree. Then Grisly Bear stepped up to string the bow and tried and tried but could not bend it, and, after him, Elk and all the large animals, but all failed. Finally, Wren, the smallest of birds, hopped up and all the people laughed, but Wren bent it and strung it easily. Then all the large animals tried to shoot an arrow at the sky, but none could bend the bow. After all others had failed, Wren pulled the arrow back to the head and let fly, and it disappeared in the air. All tried to follow it with their eyes, but could not until Snail called out, " I see it sticking there in the sky." He tried to show it to the other people, but they could not see it, so the next time Snail aimed the arrow while Wren pulled it and it flew and struck the first in the notch and stuck there. Then they shot arrow after arrow, and each stuck in the notch of the one preceding and made a chain reaching down to the earth. As soon as the chain of arrows reached the ground the people prepared to ascend. While they were gathering around, Fish Hawk said he didn't believe Snail's eyes were as good as he said they were and asked him to lend them to him for him to try. Snail took out his eyes and gave them to Fish Hawk, who tried them, and, finding them so good, flew off with them, saying that he needed them while Snail did not, so he would keep them. And ever since that time Fish Hawk has had wonderful eyes while Snail has been blind.

Then Raven began to poke fun at Skate, and told him he ought to stay behind for he was so broad that the Sky People would put a hole through him as soon as he got up there. Skate replied that he was all right and bet Raven he couldn't spear him. So Raven threw a spear at him, but as it neared him Skate turned sideways and the spear missed him. Then Skate threw a spear at Raven and it struck him in the nose, and that is why ever since then all ravens have had holes in their beaks. After this they all started up the arrow-chain and on arriving in the sky country found it was winter there and very cold, and all the people shivered and shook with the cold. So they sent Robin to the Sky People to try to steal a fire-brand. Robin came to a house of the Sky People and went in and sat down by the fire to warm himself, and it was so comfortable that he sat and sat and forgot all about going back with the coals, and he sat so long that his breast was burnt with the heat and has been red ever since. When Robin failed to appear, Dog was sent, and when he arrived at the house the Sky People took him in and gave him camass to eat, so he stayed and did not return. After Dog, Wildcat was sent and was treated the same way, so he too sat down by the fire and did not go back. At last Beaver was sent and started to swim up the river. Soon he ran into a large net, but as the Sky People pulled in the net Beaver broke through and swam on. The owner of the net called to the man next above him that he had just missed something

he had never seen before, and that man called to the next and so on up to the last net and there Beaver was caught. He pretended to be dead so that they would not club him, and they carried him up to the house and all gathered around to examine him, for they had never seen anything like Beaver before and did not know what this strange animal was. But the girl, Raven's daughter, was there in the house and recognized all her friends but sat still in a corner and said nothing. When the people got their knives and were all ready to skin Beaver, he sprang up suddenly, seized a fire-brand in each hand and, rushing out, jumped into the river and swam down to his people holding the fire-brands above his head. After they had the fire well started, they sent all the rats and mice among the Sky People to cut all the bowstrings of the men and all the girdles of the women and all fastenings of any kind which they could find.

So when all was ready the Earth People attacked. The Sky men tried to use their bows, but the bowstrings were cut. The women tried to put on their clothes to run away, but could not fasten them and had to stay. So the Earth People went from house to house and killed great numbers of the Sky People. At last the men of the Sky People rallied and began to beat back the people from the earth. So, taking the girl with them, they retreated down the arrow-chain, and they had nearly all got safely down when the chain broke so that some of them were left hanging in the sky and can be seen there now in the stars.

How Eagle and Raven Arranged Things in the Early Days*

Eagle once proposed that Quinault Lake should be a prairie with the river running through the middle, but Raven objected and said, " No, that would be too easy for the people; they ought to work if they want anything. If they want camass-root they should be compelled to go through the woods and find the prairies and pack the camass out." And so the lake has remained as it is.

Then Eagle said to Raven, " One side of the river ought to flow up and one side down." But Raven said to Eagle, " That would be too easy for the people. When they wish to go up-stream they ought to have to pole up." And that is why all streams flow down, and the eddies are the results of Eagle's words.

Another time, Eagle said, " The ' eggs ' in the male salmon ought to be so fat that the people can use them to cook the fish in." But Raven said, " No, the fish would be too good for the people that way. The ' eggs ' shall be worthless and be thrown away, otherwise they would be too good."

Not long after this, Eagle's child died and he went to Raven and said that it would be better if people who died should come back to life

* Farrand, op. cit., p. 111.

again. But Raven replied that it was better that they remain dead and not come back. And it was arranged that way.

Now Eagle used to catch lots of salmon and Raven asked him to tell him how he did it. Then Eagle explained how he used his little son for bait. He lowered him into deep water and the boy would catch the fish and string them on a cedar-rope which he took down with him. As soon as he had the rope filled he gave a signal on the line and Eagle pulled him up. So Raven went out to try and took his daughter with him. He fastened her to a line, as Eagle had told him, and let her down into deep water. He waited and waited for the signal, but it did not come, so at last he pulled her up and found her drowned. He brought the body home in his canoe and asked Eagle if he did not think it was better after all that the dead should come to life again. But Eagle answered that he had become convinced that it was better as it was—that the dead should remain dead. And so he got even with Raven.

If it had not been for Raven in the first place, people would still come to life again.

Sowittan, or the Grumbler*

In olden times, people had no canoes as they have nowadays, but used big logs for going about with. They had to trust to the tides and currents to take them to the islands they wished to visit. Now there lived a man whose name was Sowittan, who lived at Chemainus. Word had come to him that at Stitless or New Westminster there dwelt a fair maiden, and he became so eager to see her that he determined to cross the Gulf, which was almost impassable on account of the huge and terrible serpents and fish that lived there. However, nothing daunted, Sowittan started off on his big log, but when he got to the Gulf he had to turn back as he could not cross, so home again he came and hunted for all the poisonous herbs he could gather and tied them into bundles and put them on his log, and started again. This time he was successful, as he kept the monsters busy with the bundles of herbs that he threw them and so crossed the Gulf in safety.

On the North Arm there lived a man called Hanaymult, the first man who was made there. He had a large family now and when Sowittan came he was glad to see him. After many days' feasting and dancing, Sowittan claimed the maiden, who was glad to have such a brave husband. Sowittan now made ready for the voyage home. He collected fresh poisonous herbs and tied them on; then he and his bride sat on the log and set off for home. The monsters tried to devour them but the herbs had the power to quiet them and so Sowittan crossed the Gulf safely. The currents took them into all the little bays and harbours.

* Martha Douglas Harris, *History and Folklore of the Cowichan Indians,* Victoria, 1901, pp. 7–10.

After this long voyage they reached home and were warmly welcomed by their friends.

One day when Sowittan was busy trying to dry fish, two men appeared, coming down from the clouds. How frightened he was, but they made signs to him not to be alarmed. Then they asked him what his name was.

"Oh, it is Sowittan, or the man who grumbles."

"Why, what have you to grumble about?" said they.

"Oh, everything."

"Well, tell us them and perhaps we can help you. Our name is Haalees, or spirit men. Now, you have a wife; you must be enjoying yourself."

"No, indeed, I have much to trouble about. You see me now trying to dry this fish; well, it is far too big and before I have finished it begins to decay. The herrings are all too big; everything is too large. The deer are so big that we cannot eat them and they have to rot. Everything was made wrongly; I could do better myself. The mountains are so big I can't see over the tops and so high I cannot get a breath of wind from the big sea. Everything is so dry; no rain; and yet the land is so swampy that every time I take a step I almost fall in. Then I am too big too."

After Sowittan had finished his long string of trouble, the Haalees said, "Now, Sowittan, let us go over and consult your father-in-law; perhaps he will not think as you do."

So they all went off on Sowittan's log and went to visit Hanaymult and get his opinion. At first Hanaymult thought that everything was just right, but maybe the sturgeon were too large; in fact, it was impossible to use them so fishing was bad.

So the Haalees promised that they would make the world over again so as to suit them. They gave Sowittan a sling-shot and a hard black stone. "Now," said the Haalees, "shoot at the mountains till you are satisfied with them."

Then he took the sling and stone and peppered away at the mountains. The tops fell off and fell into the sea with a tremendous noise, the waters boiled furiously, and up came islands; that is how there are so many islands along the coast. The fish died in the sea and the plains burnt up.

"Now, Sowittan, how does this please you?"

"Well, I don't know yet. I will go to the top of the hills and look if I can see the big water."

By and by he came back, quite joyfully. He was almost satisfied.

"Now for the swampy places. Take these slates and stick them in the ground and then walk on them and see if you sink."

So Sowittan did as he was told and to his joy the plain was made hard so that he could walk without sinking in the earth. When he returned he said, "Haalees, this is just what I want. Make me small too and I shall be happy."

So Haalees granted him his wish and in an instant he grew shorter, but shouted, "Stop! Stop! I don't want to be too small."

So they made him the height that men now grow. After this the Haalees or spirits went up to heaven. Sowittan became happy and the father of many people.

The War Song*

The great snake Stimqua fell into the harbour, and the people were so alarmed that they did not know what to do.

"Come, let us kill this monster, and he will be in our power."

So the brave men of the tribe got into their canoes and surrounded the snake and killed it, and dragged the huge monster to the foot of the Cowichan Mountain. The rope was made of cedar-bark. The spear that killed Stimqua was poisoned with his blood, and his spirit came on the people. This is the song that was made to commemorate the event, and is only sung when going to battle:—

If we only shake our spear at you
And shout "Whow!" you die.
We are the Cowichans,
Stimqua is our power.

The Story of Quamichan†

A wild woman named Quamichan, who made a basket out of a snake, was a giantess and her whole appearance was disgusting. She lived on human flesh and sneaked about villages stealing the children, whom she put into her snake-basket. She lived on Salt Spring Island, near Kuper Island. She had wings and used to fly about Saanich and elsewhere stealing young people. Her sister was a very small woman and hated Quamichan bitterly. Quamichan decided to have a big feast and invite her friends, so for a few days she was busy stealing children, whom she hid in a cave. When she had enough, she dug a huge pit about 100 feet square and very deep. She put big sticks across the top and between she placed small, dry wood and kindlings and then big stones on the top of all. Then she set fire to the wood. She called the children out and made them sit down and watch the fire. There were hundreds of poor children, crying and begging to be let go home. She made fire by rubbing two sticks together in this fashion: A flat stick with a small hole in the middle and a small round stick with a sharp

* Harris, op. cit., p. 14.
† Harris, op. cit., pp. 15–17.

point to fit in the flat piece of wood; then the round stick was rubbed violently between the two palms, and as soon as smoke and sparks were seen coming out, fine, dry cedar-bark was held to the sparks, and as they fell on the bark it was gently blown and the fire fanned into flame.

Now after the fire had started, Quamichan danced around the pit, singing and shouting, "Now I am going to have a big feast with my friends and eat these young animals," as she called the children. "I hope the stones will get red-hot quickly so that they will be well cooked."

She told her sister to take pitch-pine and make the children open their eyes and smear their eye-balls with the pitch, so that they could not see what was going to happen. Now the sister's heart was tender. She took the pitch and went to each child and bid it close its eyes, and put the pitch on the lids and said to each, "When I call out 'Open your eyes!' you must get sticks and be ready, for I am going to punish Quamichan. Now, be ready."

When she had finished, Quamichan told her to take out the sticks and throw them to one side, as the stones were red-hot.

"Yes, sister," she said, "but first dance again and sing, for you sing so well, and shut your eyes tight and look up as you dance."

Quamichan was greatly pleased with this little flattery, and danced away like mad. The little sister now got a long pole, and when Quamichan came close by her, she thrust the long pole between her legs and tripped her, and Quamichan fell into the hot pit on her back. She screamed to her sister to help her out.

"Oh, yes, I am helping you out, but you are awfully heavy; call on the boys and girls to help."

With that the sister shouted, "Children, open your eyes," and they took sticks and threw them into the pit where they caught fire. Quamichan was burning like oil, and the sparks from her turned into ducks, geese, and all sorts of birds. This was the end of Quamichan. The little sister sent the poor children back to their homes rejoicing. The Cowichan Indians called themselves Quamichans, after this big woman, and they learned to make fire from her.

Raven Plays a Cruel Trick on Sea-gull*

Very, very long ago, it was always dark. The people lived in a dim twilight so that if they wanted to see what was going on they had to light torches, but generally they stumbled about in the dreary darkness.

It was not really necessary for them to endure this discomfort. The fact was that Sea-gull had made off with precious Daylight and had shut it tightly up in a chest, which he had hidden secretly in his house. And he roughly said "No, no" to everyone who came and asked him to

* *Folklore of the Far West*, unpublished MSS. of Alice Ravenhill.

release Daylight from his prison and to allow the world again to be flooded with lovely light.

Now Raven was much concerned at the discomfort of the people always stumbling about in dim darkness, so he made up his mind that some way must be found to make Sea-gull share precious Daylight with the world. He thought often on the matter, and one day he made a plan which he believed would restore Daylight to all his friends.

So he made a large torch and went down to the sea-shore to hunt for sea-urchins. These he ate greedily, and the spiney shells he carried up to Sea-gull's house, where he spread them thickly over the door-step. Very soon Sea-gull woke up and said to himself, " It is time to get up and get some fish for breakfast." So out of his door he stepped. But alas! As he put down his feet the sharp spines of the sea-urchin shells, which he could not see in the darkness, wounded his webbed toes, so that quickly he drew back indoors, unable to put one foot to the ground so great was the pain.

Crafty Raven had been on the watch close by. Now he knocked at Sea-gull's door and asked if he might come in for a friendly chat. He expressed much sympathy with poor Sea-gull in his pain, and as Sea-gull told him what had happened, Raven pretended great surprise at the cruel trick which had been played. At once he offered to remove the sharp spines if Sea-gull would lend him a knife, but he proceeded to use it so roughly that Sea-gull screamed with pain. " I cannot see what I am doing," said Raven, " I must have more light, then I shall not hurt you." So Sea-gull, in his misery, pulled out from its hiding-place the precious chest in which he had imprisoned Daylight, and opened it just a crack to allow Daylight to shine through.

Then Raven set to work again with his knife, but again he purposely hurt poor Sea-gull so severely that Sea-gull screamed even more loudly than before. Raven pretended to be sorry. " Give me just a little more light," he said, " then I shall see so clearly you will have no more pain." Sea-gull, mad with pain, lost all caution. " Be sure you raise the lid very cautiously," he said, as he pushed the chest close to Raven. " On no account open it at all wide." But crafty Raven, having gained his object, threw the lid of the chest wide open, seized Daylight and flew right off up through the smoke-hole. And Daylight, happy to be set free from his prison, rushed forth in his full strength and flooded the whole world.

But Sea-gull's heart was broken. In his sore distress he cried " K'nnii, K'nnii, K'nnii," and to this day his children never cease to make this same sad cry.

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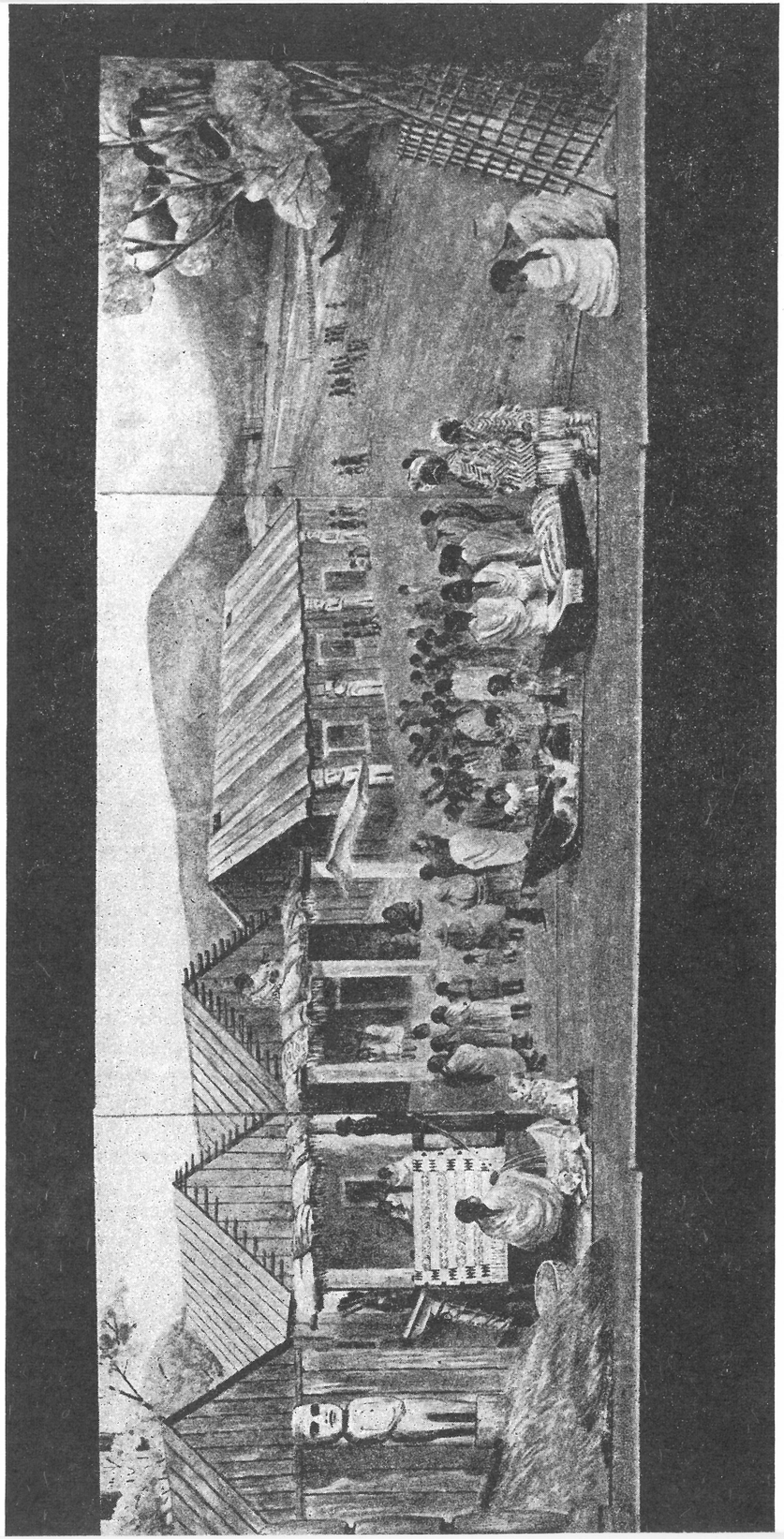

Potlatch on Vancouver Island.

Appendix B.—Description of Display Panels

Panel No. I.—Potlatch on Vancouver Island

The central theme of this panel is the *Potlatch,* that complicated system of gift-giving by which the political and economic affairs of the coastal people were regulated. The scene is Coast Salish and the carved figures on the side of the house in the centre of the panel indicate how much less elaborate were the wood-carvings of these people than those of the northern Indians.

The scene portrayed here shows several good examples of how contact between unrelated groups influenced the culture of each although, as previously mentioned, culture transfer between two groups was rarely on an equal scale. Almost invariably there is a dominant and a subordinate culture and consequently the culture-absorption pattern is somewhat lop-sided.

In the background beyond the river, an old lean-to type of house may be seen. The walls, held upright by long stakes driven in the ground, both inside and out, are higher toward the front, giving the roof its single slope.

In the foreground is shown the gable-roof type of house adopted from the Kwakiutl tribes of the north. The transfer of this particular culture trait was aided by the establishment of European sawmills around the middle of the nineteenth century.

The canoes drawn up on the beach are of a sea-going design borrowed from the Nootka people of the west coast of Vancouver Island. The other canoe, lying at the feet of two of the cut-out figures, is a simple half-log dugout, more typically Coast Salish and used for river work by the women.

Stretched across the river at the point where the canoes are beached is a fish-weir, a device to impede the salmon in their up-stream run so they may be speared more easily. A section of such a weir is shown leaning against the tree on the right.

The cut-out figures show a woman at work weaving a blanket from the hair of a special breed of dog and using a type of loom peculiar to the Salish people. The two standing figures—a chief and his son—are shown wearing clothing made by the above process and from various native materials.

Panel No. II.—The River Scene

This scene shows the main subsistence activity of the Coast Salish tribes—the harvesting of fish during the seasonal " runs." On the right are the platforms, built out over the deep pools, from which fish are taken by means of the dip-net. The men in the canoes are setting the larger casting-nets and also are spearing what fish they can.

The cut-out shows the women splitting and cleaning the fish preparatory to being dried on the racks shown on the right and later being stored in the elevated caches, which can be seen farther along the river on the left.

PANEL NO. III.—INTERIOR OF SALISH LONG HOUSE

This is an interior scene showing a section of a typical lean-to type of "long house." The family compartments can be seen, separated from each other by rough boards and woven cedar-bark mats. Fires were lighted in the central passageway and each one served the two compartments facing each other.

As can be seen, the furniture of the house is simple. The raised benches served as beds and tables, the space underneath being used for storage. The other articles of food and equipment were placed on racks suspended from the ceiling, or hung on convenient rafters.

In the foreground, a woman weaves a blanket of goat wool and is watched by the chief, who is dressed in a European cloth robe decorated with pearl buttons. On the right, a woman is spinning yarn, which may be made from the hair of the small white dogs sprawled on the floor. With a line attached to her foot, she gently rocks the baby's cradle-board. On the left, a slave mends a dip-net, while another man is carefully fashioning a barbed harpoon point.

In the middle distance, a group of men are lounging around a fire, while beyond them the entrance to the house can be seen.

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